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ABSTRACT

This document suggests that the main purpose of the study of current affairs in the social studies program in Alberta, Canada, is to add relevance, interest, and immediacy. It defines current affairs as the study of news events presented by the media. Because the study of current affairs must be tied to the achievement of social studies objectives, the general purpose of the monograph is to provide suggestions for teachers on how current affairs can be used in order to attain these important objectives. In discussing the study of controversial topics, the argument is made that issues related to the study of curriculum topics have a defensible place and purpose. This monograph presents examples to illustrate what is meant by "structured and disciplined" inquiry. Current affairs issues, by their very nature, are more likely to be relevant, meaningful, and of interest to students, yet directly linked to the required course objectives. The study of current affairs in social studies provides a rich field for the development of abilities and dispositions toward critical thinking. Although emotional discussions may do more to reinforce or confuse, rather than clarify or change, existing beliefs, teachers who are critical minded in their approach to current affairs will more likely be able to promote critical mindedness in their students. The teaching of critical thinking has a natural place and role in social studies instruction. The accumulation of knowledge alone is training. The application of critical thinking to a field of knowledge is education. Two approaches to the study of current affairs are explored. (DK)

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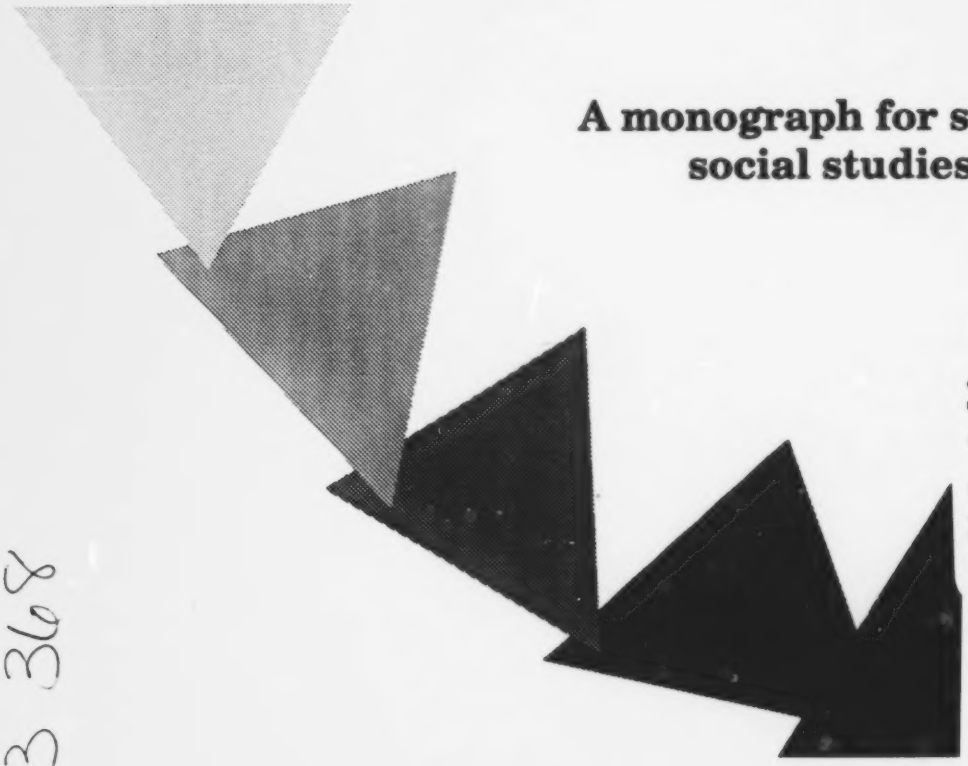

A monograph for secondary social studies teachers

1992

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FOCUS ON CURRENT AFFAIRS

A MONOGRAPH FOR SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

1992

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I OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The main purpose of the study of current affairs in the social studies program is to add "relevance, interest and immediacy".

*"The study of **current affairs** adds considerably to the relevance, interest and immediacy of the Alberta Social Studies Program"* (Senior High Social Studies Program of Studies, p. 7).

It is hard to imagine a social studies program that ignores current affairs.

The constitutional debate in Canada, environmental issues, human rights issues and international conflicts can all be studied through the news media. How can one study the Cold War period without digressing to note that it ended just recently? And, how could anyone teach about the Soviet Union without including news stories describing the disintegration of the country leading to its final collapse on December 25, 1991. This development alone has very important direct implications for the study of Social Studies Program of Studies, Topics 9B and 30/33B. Such rapidly changing events can quickly outdate many of our textbooks and maps. It is impossible for curriculum resources to adapt immediately to the momentous changes we have witnessed since the Gorbachev revolution, which began in 1985.

It is essential, therefore, that teachers access and use the current affairs information available through print and electronic media. These examples show that, in some cases, current affairs information can become as essential as any basic textbook for the study of a topic.

The term "current affairs" is used in this monograph to describe the general study of news events presented by the media. Teachers may be familiar with the term "current events"; however, for the purpose of this monograph, the two terms will have somewhat different meanings.

Current affairs is the study of news events presented by the media.

Current affairs is the broader term that includes particular current events. A **current event** is usually a discrete news item such as the resignation of Gorbachev on December 25, 1991, as President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A news broadcast, newspaper or magazine is made up of many such events. Any study of current affairs will include a number of related current news events. Thus, the political changes in the Soviet Union is a current affairs topic that would include the resignation of Gorbachev, the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, negotiations over control of the nuclear weapons, and many other specific events.

The study of current affairs in social studies is intended to be broad and purposeful, where discrete events are selected for analysis. In contrast, the study of discrete events implies a simple retelling of disconnected news stories.

Major news events such as the removal of the Berlin Wall, the death of Meech Lake, the Gulf War, a local murder, severe weather conditions or even the Stanley Cup playoffs will be on the minds of students and teachers. It is natural to talk about these events in home, coffee shops and classrooms. In fact, it is hard to avoid the

media bombardment of the latest major news story. Talking about current affairs in class to add "relevance, interest and immediacy" is a natural part of social studies instruction; however, more than talk is required.

The study of current affairs must be tied to the achievement of social studies objectives.

First, current affairs topics need to be selected for the purpose of achieving social studies objectives. How does the teacher select **relevant** news stories? Relevance is a much-abused term since it is by definition bound to personal interest and experience. The fall of the Soviet Union may not be of interest to some students but it is certainly relevant to the study of the history of the 20th century. Curriculum relevance and student interest are both important considerations in the selection of current affairs topics for the social studies program.

The general purpose of this monograph is to provide suggestions for teachers on how current affairs can be used in order to attain these important objectives.

The study of current affairs should help achieve many social studies objectives. The intended role of current affairs in the social studies curriculum is that they "will be handled as inclusions and extensions of curricular objectives, not as a separate topic isolated from the program" (Senior High Social Studies Program of Studies, p. 7). Current affairs materials can be used as valuable resources for developing many knowledge, skill and attitude objectives of the social studies program. The study of current affairs can provide students with opportunities for applying problem-solving and decision-making strategies that will help them develop their critical and creative thinking abilities.

THE STUDY OF CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

The study of current affairs requires a degree of caution. Controversial issues can sometimes emerge. Issues, by definition, are questions about which there is significant disagreement. Disagreement about the best way to solve regional economic disparity in Canada may not generate a great deal of emotion. But if the issue is language, the death penalty or racial incidents, emotions can run high.

Issues related to the study of curriculum topics have a defensible place and purpose.

The study of issues is a normal and expected part of the Alberta social studies program, but teachers need to exercise good judgment when selecting current affairs topics. For example, issues that are directly related to the study of curriculum topics have a defensible place and purpose.

This monograph will present some examples to illustrate what is meant by "structured and disciplined" inquiry.

Teachers need to understand that the substance of a discussion about issues is much more important than the form. Highly sensitive topics may generate a heated discussion but very little learning. The skills learned through a structured and disciplined inquiry are much more important in the long run than any short-term emotional arguments that generate more heat than light.

Alberta Education's policy on controversial issues recognizes and supports the inclusion of these topics in classroom instruction:

> Alberta Education believes that studying controversial issues is important in preparing students to participate responsibly in a democratic and pluralistic society. Such study provides opportunities to develop students' capacities to think clearly, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view, and to reach sound judgments. (See Appendix C: Controversial Issues.)

ISSUES AND INQUIRY

The study of issues is mandatory in the current social studies curriculum. Each topic requires that "...at least one issue and one question" be addressed using appropriate inquiry strategies. Several suggested examples of issues and questions are listed for each topic. For example, in Social Studies 10, Topic A: Canada in the 20th Century, a suggested issue is: "Should Canadians pursue a strong national identity at all costs?" A suggested question is: "What is the Canadian identity?"

Different inquiry models are suggested for dealing with problem-solving and decision-making questions (see Appendix A: Models of Inquiry). Many inquiry goals are met through the application of these problem-solving and decision-making strategies. The Senior High Social Studies Program of Studies recognizes that inquiry strategies require special attention:

> The success of inquiry is enhanced by selecting questions and issues related to the topic that are concrete, relevant, meaningful and of interest to students. Issues and questions can be teacher- or student-generated (p. 4).

Current affairs issues, by their very nature, are more likely to be "relevant, meaningful and of interest to students" yet directly linked to the required course objectives.

Herein lies an added reason for the study of current affairs. To stand the test of time, the curriculum is quite general. Current affairs issues, by their very nature, are more likely to be "relevant, meaningful and of interest to students" yet directly linked to the required course objectives. Students may not be interested in general issues listed in the program of studies, such as this example from Social Studies 30, Topic B: "Should nations pursue national interests beyond their boundaries?" However, they will likely be interested in a current affairs issue such as: "Should Canada (or the United States) go to war against Iraq?" or, "Should NATO be eliminated now that the Cold War has ended?"

DEVELOPING CRITICAL MINDEDNESS

The study of current affairs in Alberta social studies should promote an attitude of critical mindedness in both teachers and students. Werner and Nixon (1990) state that "critical mindedness is necessary when students analyze controversial issues", and describe a "critically minded" student as follows:

> To be critically minded means that students do not take information as given. They question the clarity and strength of reasoning, identify assumptions and values, recognize points of view and attitudes, and evaluate conclusions and actions (pp. 2–3).

The Alberta Education document, *Teaching Thinking: Enhancing Learning*, 1990, provides a similar list of characteristics of a skillful thinker:

- interest in the sources of personal attitudes, beliefs and values
- a desire to reason well and base judgments on evidence
- seek information from several viewpoints
- recognize unstated assumptions, fallacies and bias
- approach decision making, problem solving and issue resolution systematically
- explore ideas beyond what is presented—a "let's find out" attitude
- display a sense of humour and social understanding.

The study of current affairs in social studies provides a rich field for the development of abilities and dispositions toward critical thinking.

Skillful thinkers dig deeper to uncover underlying values, bias and assumptions. The study of current affairs in social studies provides a rich field for the development of abilities and dispositions toward critical thinking.

The teacher sets the climate and conditions for promoting critical thinking in students. This climate needs to be open to student inquiry into issues and problems of current interest. Many of these issues and problems can be developed from a systematic study of current affairs. (Note the teacher's role in stimulating the development of critical thinking outlined on pp. 15 to 22 of the document, *Teaching Thinking: Enhancing Learning*, 1990.)

. . . emotional discussions may do more to reinforce or confuse, rather than clarify or change, existing beliefs.

Recent research by cognitive and developmental psychologists suggests that the understanding of new ideas requires linkage to beliefs and knowledge of existing schemata, which are defined by Lynch and McKenna as the ". . . relatively permanent knowledge patterns in memory". Lynch and McKenna (1990) state that: ". . . controversial issues that truly engage students' emotions will have greater potential for misunderstanding". Emotional discussions may do more to reinforce or confuse, rather than clarify or change, existing beliefs. They caution teachers that changing prior beliefs requires ". . . critical thinking skills, perspective-taking abilities, and an emotional stability to examine sensitive issues" (p. 317).

If students in Grade 10 are told to collect any news related to national unity as a current affairs project they may collect a series of discrete news stories that support their opinions about national unity. Those who oppose and those who support national unity will tend to pick different news stories. Their presentation of the findings is likely to be opinionated and lead to arguments with others who hold a different point of view. The outcome of this type of activity in the name of current affairs can be to harden opinion, not examine it. It is a strategy that promotes telling and convincing others rather than listening to and hearing others.

The attitude of critical mindedness applies to teachers as well as students. Teachers' attitudes toward current affairs and the study of issues are probably more important in the long run than their knowledge of specific issues or methodology.

> A pedagogy of issues must go beyond the 'information about' an issue and the 'instructional strategies for' the classroom. What is needed is a quality of mind that will help us to use the information to develop in ourselves and in our students an understanding of what is happening in society (Wilson, p. 3).

Teachers who are critically minded in their approach to current affairs will more likely be able to promote critical mindedness in their students.

Wilson calls this quality of mind a "pedagogy of imagination" that links personal perspectives to the larger society. In other words, teachers and students make these links as active members of society. Teachers are not "neutral observers" but active participants in the issues of the day. The manner in which teachers deal with current affairs issues themselves sets a very important model for the students.

CRITICAL THINKING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

The study of current affairs in social studies must be deliberate and purposeful. The Senior High Social Studies Program of Studies states that the goal of the Alberta social studies program is to ". . . assist students to acquire basic knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to be responsible citizens and contributing members of society," and that, as responsible citizens, ". . . students require a wide range of critical and creative thinking skills and strategies that they can apply to a variety of situations" (p. 1).

How are such critical thinking skills and strategies developed? According to the Senior High Social Studies Program of Studies, thinking skills ". . . are developed by providing students with many experiences using strategies such as problem solving and decision making" (p. 4). The document, *Teaching Thinking: Enhancing Learning*, 1990, defines thinking as ". . . the mental processes and skills we use to shape our lives" (p. 7).

The teaching of critical thinking has a natural place and role in social studies instruction.

What is the difference between a "thinking" activity and a "critical thinking" activity? The *Social Studies Teacher Resource Manual for Grades 4–6*, 1989, makes the distinction this way: "What distinguishes critical thinking from other thinking strategies is the purpose to which it is put: to evaluate the importance of an idea" (p. 10). When students do problem-solving or decision-making activities that require the application of judgments, they are practising critical thinking. The teaching of critical thinking has a natural place and role in social studies instruction.

APPROACHES TO TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING

Selman (1990) notes five main approaches to teaching critical thinking: the process skills approach; the problem-solving approach; the logical approach; the information processing approach; and the multi-aspect approach.

Selman notes that the process skills approach is the most popular and the most problematic because it is based on the false assumption that critical thinking can be broken down into and taught as discrete skills. In other words, good thinking equals a good set of skills. Deborah Court (1991) states the argument this way:

> If critical thinking is viewed as a set of skills, these skills must be assumed to be general skills, applicable in all situations, and this approach is simply not workable. Analysis, for instance, is a vastly different thing in different situations. Analyzing an argument, a poem, a political situation, a chemical compound, or an algebra problem requires different knowledge and abilities. There are no exercises we can give students to practise the skill of analysis, because there is no such generic skill (p. 117).

Selman's multi-aspect approach reflects some very different assumptions about critical thinking. This approach recognizes the importance of abilities and dispositions of a good critical thinker. Seeking reasons and trying to be open-minded are two examples of dispositions. Examples of abilities include being able to analyze arguments and evaluate value judgments. The definition of critical thinking in this approach is from Norris and Ennis (1989) who define critical thinking as "reasonable and effective thinking that is focused upon deciding what to believe or do" (p. 3).

This preferred approach to the teaching of critical thinking is advocated by the philosopher, John E. McPeck, who states in his book, *Critical Thinking and Education*: ". . . it is a matter of conceptual truth that thinking is always *thinking about X*, and that X can never be 'everything in general' but must always be something in particular" (p. 4). McPeck argues further that since "critical thinking is always 'critical thinking about X', it follows that critical thinking is intimately connected with other fields of knowledge" (p. 28).

McPeck reminds us of the important place of knowledge in any effort to teach critical thinking. In *Teaching Critical Thinking: Dialogue and Dialectic*, he states, "basic knowledge and information is a prerequisite for critical thinking . . . " (p. 44). In other words, you have to know something before you can do any critical thinking about it. McPeck goes further than simply connecting knowledge and thinking. He claims there is an "intimate connection between the *kinds of knowledge* and their corresponding *kinds of skills*" (p. 28). Critical thinking in social studies is not necessarily the same as critical thinking in other subject areas.

A critical thinker is one who has particular knowledge and a perspective or attitude of tentativeness about that knowledge. The accumulation of knowledge alone is training; the application of critical thinking to a field of knowledge is education.

The accumulation of knowledge alone is training. The application of critical thinking to a field of knowledge is education.

Selman, Court and McPeck have given us a broader understanding of critical thinking. They have also pointed to particular instructional implications for teachers who are selecting the most appropriate and effective ways of promoting critical thinking for their students. Deborah Court offers the following practical advice for teachers:

> In a critical thinking classroom, there would be ongoing discussion and debate, leading to judgments, decisions, and compromises. The problems and questions under discussion would be real-world problems about the running of the school and issues in the community and about academic issues related to history, science, mathematics, and art (p. 117).

TWO APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

One simple approach to the study of current affairs could be called "find and re-tell". Students find news stories and restate them in class. This very limited approach could be used if a teacher simply wants students to become aware of the many sources of current affairs information. It may teach students that the various news media provide a great deal of information about the world; however, the problem is that students are not required to look behind the news for meaning and to dig deeper for understanding.

The first approach (Approach I) involves having students find certain kinds of news events, related to a topic or issue, and organize them into some kind of order for presentation. The presentation is usually a retelling of the selected news items as a connected story. Since many of the news items collected will be the same, but from various sources, students can check the accuracy or inaccuracy of the information. The information is cumulative and the classroom story about the topic becomes quite detailed and fairly accurate.

In Approach II, the teacher asks the students to search for particular information on a current affairs topic. Students have free rein to seek news stories from any source; however, there is a clear structure for analysis and interpretation. It is also recognized that the search for current affairs information will yield both factual news reports and editorial interpretations of the news. These two types of sources require different strategies for critical analysis.

This preferred approach (Approach II) has students interpret and evaluate the news. Students find current affairs information as an integral part of the study of a social studies topic. The students do a critical analysis of news reports, using a specific set of questions.

APPROACH I: ANALYZING FACTUAL NEWS REPORT

Typical news stories that tell about some current event considered newsworthy are **supposed** to be objectively reported. First, students use their reading, listening and viewing skills to gather information from print and electronic media. Then, they correctly identify the factual information in the news story and separate it from interpretations by the reporter about the news story. The following set of questions should help the students do this in a systematic way.

1. What is the main point or idea?

   The headline or byline usually contains the essential idea of the story.

2. What factual information is provided?

   The students should note the essential information using the five Ws: Who? What? When? Where? and Why? The why question requires particular attention. Students should identify if it is the writer who gives an opinion about the story or whether opinions of others are reported.

3. What are the sources?

   One source is indicated in the byline of the story, which identifies authorship. The other sources are those used by the author of the story. These sources are usually identified; however, writers will sometimes resort to quoting "anonymous" or "reliable" sources as the foundation of the story. Teachers and students will need to make value judgments about the reliability of various sources.

4. Personal reflection

   This is where the student makes value judgments about the news report. Students may consider several questions in formulating their opinion. Why is the story important? Does it touch on some important current issue? Will it be relevant a day, week or year from now? How reliable is the information? Is the story objective? Are facts separated from opinions?

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.1

APPROACH I: ANALYZING FACTUAL NEWS REPORTS

1. What is the main point or idea? _____

   _____

   _____

2. What factual information is provided?

   Ask the five W questions:

   Who? _____

   What? _____

   When? _____

   Where? _____

   Why? _____

3. What are the sources?

   Byline? _____

   Persons quoted? _____

   _____

4. Personal reflection about the news report

   Sample questions:

   Why is the story important? _____

   Does it touch on some important current issue? _____

   Will it be relevant a day, week or year from now? _____

   How reliable is the information? _____

   Is the story objective? _____

   Are facts separated from opinions? _____

   _____

APPROACH II: ANALYZING POINT OF VIEW REPORTS

Editorials, columns by news commentators, documentaries, news features and letters to the editor take a point of view or present an argument. They often deal with a current news event but they do not merely "report". The *Calgary Herald*'s Ombudsman, Jim Stott, puts it this way: "The opinions on the [editorial] page are usually vigorous, often controversial and sometimes deliberately one-sided. It is the editorialist's job to take a position and argue it as strongly as possible." The key task for students is to identify the argument along with the supporting evidence and evaluate both.

For "point of view" reports, students should use this set of questions:

1. What is the argument?

2. What evidence is given to support the argument?

3. Evaluate the argument and the evidence.

Students need to take a disciplined approach to this kind of analysis because it is very easy to miss the argument and react to what **seems** to be in the story.

Step 1: Students demonstrate that they know what the argument is before giving their own opinion about it, usually by stating the argument briefly in their own words and possibly using direct quotes.

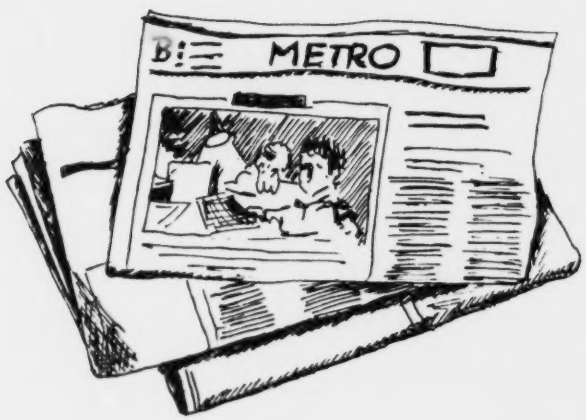
Step 2: Students list the evidence presented to support the argument. Students should use specific quotations to present the evidence.

Step 3: Students evaluate the report, using these kind of questions as their criteria:

- Does the author provide adequate evidence to support the argument?
- Is the argument clear?
- Is the argument consistent?
- Are the author's values evident?
- Is the information relevant to the argument?
- Has the author made certain basic assumptions?
- Is the argument strong or weak?

Using this **disciplined and structured approach,** students learn to examine news stories in a critical and open-minded way. Sorting out facts from opinions, and detecting bias and underlying assumptions are hallmarks of critical mindedness. Students need to do something with information to make it meaningful. Taking a critical look at news reports gives them the power to interpret and decide for themselves what any story is worth. Merely retelling news reports gives the impression that what is in the news is true and, ultimately, that the daily news defines the truth and reality of our world.

As will be shown in the next part of this monograph, the news is selected by people who work in the various media. Their function is to provide the best available information. Our function as citizens in a democratic society is to evaluate the information critically and make it serve our needs. News reporters provide information; individuals make meaning of the information.



STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.2

APPROACH II: ANALYZING POINT OF VIEW REPORTS

1. What is the argument?

2. What evidence is given to support the argument?

3. Evaluate the argument and the evidence.

   Does the author provide adequate evidence to support the argument? _____

   Is the argument clear? _____

   Is the argument consistent? _____

   Are the author's values identified? _____

   Is the information relevant to the argument? _____

   Does the author make certain basic assumptions? _____

   Is the argument strong or weak? _____

II UNDER-STANDING THE MEDIA

The study of current affairs draws upon news reports created and communicated by the media. A resource guide called *Media Literacy*, prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Education, notes: "Virtually all that we know, or think we know, about the world beyond our immediate experience comes to us through the media" (p. 5). Werner and Nixon make the same point, stating that to a large extent the media is our primary source of information, and what we know about current issues comes through "pre-selected and interpreted ideas that are given to us on the printed page and television screen" (p. 2).

The media plays a powerful role in our lives. By the time a student graduates from high school he or she will have spent 11,000 hours in school compared to 15,000 hours watching television and 10,500 hours listening to popular music. In his book, *Teaching as a Conserving Activity*, Neil Postman claims that "television is the 'first curriculum' and it is the job of the school, 'the second curriculum', to mitigate and moderate the effects of the first" (p. 147).

The view of the world provided by the media tends to be sensational and event-centred. We are presented with a daily diet of news about natural and man-made disasters, such as earthquakes, famine and war. Our emotions are stirred as we are angered by stories of cruel dictators violating human rights, and concerned, even fearful of our own survival, when we see the environmental damage to the whales or the rain forest of Brazil. People who live in safe communities become fearful of going for a walk in their own neighborhood because of stories about the increase in crime. These events can become "real" to the point that some of our young, healthy, well-fed children, living in a peaceful country like Canada, can experience real fear and anger. The daily diet of "pre-selected and interpreted" violence, murder and disaster should not be repeated by the schools in the name of current affairs. Instead, the systematic study of current affairs must include a critical examination of the content of news reports, and of the way news reports are created and reported.

Passive acceptance of news from the media can make us feel powerless—as consumers of news, not participants. We need to remind students that a news story is a report about something by someone who selects, interprets and defines it. Randolph Ryan, editorial writer and columnist for the *Boston Globe*, sees the problem of selectivity in this way:

> To me, the great moral issue in news work is . . . what stories are you going to cover? Think of it as a dark room. You're there with a flashlight. The room is full of dark corners. Which dark corner are you going to point your flashlight at? That's the agenda-setting aspect of the news and it's absolutely crucial (National Film Board Kit, *The Media and Society*, p. 108).

Educators need to recognize the nature and selectivity of news reports and encourage students to do the same. Students should learn that news reports are created by imperfect human beings who interpret reality.

One way to consider the selective nature of making a news program is to imagine how the events of any day are reported. There are millions of other stories that could be reported. In fact, all of us probably have an important story to tell every day! Very few of these stories are considered to be "newsworthy" so they go unreported. Even newsworthy events, however, must be reported by someone before they have a chance to "make the news". Read a small town newspaper and you will get a very different notion of what is considered "news" for that community. Is a weekend family reunion "news"? It certainly is for the family and their community. Yet you won't often find such a story in *The Edmonton Journal* or the *Calgary Herald*. One reason why most news stories come from the large urban centres is simply because that is where the reporters happen to be. Of this small pool of reported stories, a special few are selected by the major papers and television as "news". Finally, a lead story is selected to become the feature or headline news event of the day. The following chart is a graphic illustration of this idea.

How the News Is Selected

A News Information Fallout Illustration of a Day in the News

Actual events on any day (unlimited number)

X X X X X X X X X X X X
X X X X X X X X X X X X

Stories that are reported and "make the news media"
(e.g., daily newspapers, radio and television)

X X X X X

Headline or lead stories featured in the media

X X

Archival storage
(e.g., magazines, books, textbooks, documentary films)

X

CURRENT AFFAIRS THROUGH THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Most classroom studies of current affairs focus on print media because they are easier to assemble and use. However, since students usually spend more time listening to radio and watching television, their news stories should also come from these sources. The presentation of the news by the electronic and print media tends to be different. The stories can be the same but the nature of the media changes the way the news is presented. Neil Postman notes that television "is biased towards furnishing images and fragments" and that in the "absence of continuity and context, bits of information cannot be integrated into an intelligent and consistent whole" (p. 147). Television, more than any other media, is event-centred.

The strength and weakness of television is its compelling immediacy. More people listened to the American President's press conference on the war with Iraq on January 17, 1991, than to any other single television program. Millions watched the Iraq war unfold on television waiting for the latest bits of information. People are naturally curious. They want to know what is going on and television has the capacity to inform immediately—to place the person right in the middle of the event. However, this preoccupation with the present is also a great weakness, as demonstrated by television coverage of live events.

The need for new information to fill air time is so pressing that reporters begin reporting rumours, speculations about speculations and even each others' comments. The news reporters become the news makers! One reporter's comments on a rumour about the possible use of nerve gas weapons during the Gulf War was described by another reporter as a "new development". When this story proved to be untrue, that also became news. Nothing is feared more on radio or television than dead air time. Reporters look foolish, technicians are embarrassed and viewers quickly become annoyed and change stations. So, even if there is nothing to say, reporters have to keep talking as if there is something to say.

Teachers should take advantage of the opportunity to study the television media during the coverage of major live news events. The normal editorial and studio production controls are not available during live news coverage. Anchormen and reporters often must ad-lib as events unfold. Many news broadcasters are not articulate without a written script. Examples of live coverage could be used with students to unmask the mystique of news production and to illustrate the point that the news is indeed "produced" like any other TV show. News reporters prepare and read their lines like actors in front of a camera. The technical and editorial people behind the scenes are the real creators of the news shows. As noted in the Ontario resource guide, *Media Literacy*: "Television presents a version of reality that has been carefully constructed" (p.7).

If possible, footage of the live coverage of a major news story should be obtained. In contrast to the polished and professional presentations normally seen as part of the news shows, such as *CTV News*, *The National*, and local news shows, live television exposes the news-making process. Everyone wants to know what is happening, but no one knows much of anything, including the news reporters. The following example is a short account of the live coverage of the Gulf War on January 17, 1991. Most North American network stations pre-empted regular programming and carried continuous coverage of the war. The news was hot, but solid information scarce.

ABC NEWS ON THE GULF WAR

Date: January 17, 1991

4:50 p.m. Anchorman Peter Jennings, in New York, is frustrated because the Pentagon has not given their second press conference and so there is very little news to report. He switches to news correspondent, Peter Frost, in Tel Aviv to check on reports that Iraqi missiles had landed on the city. This is a major news development since it could signal the start of a much feared Arab-Israeli war.

In the confusion of live coverage, the video screen shows dark scenes from Tel Aviv but no reporter. The audio picks up some people laughing. Unable to contact Peter Frost and quite uncertain as what to do next, Peter Jennings in New York, says that the situation in Israel can't be too bad if there are people laughing! The implication of an accidental laugh is interpreted for the whole country as a sign that all is probably well in Israel.

5:45 p.m. Following up on reports of the missile attack, Peter Jennings asks the ABC news correspondent in Jerusalem, Dean Reynolds, for an update. Reynolds does not have any hard information but mentions, almost in passing, that there are rumours that the missiles have nerve gas. This is startling "news" which is repeated by Jennings as an unconfirmed report.

6:50 p.m. The rumour on the use of nerve gas is denied by Dean Reynolds based on Israeli military reports that deny any use of chemical weapons. The missiles carry regular explosive warheads. Reynolds apologizes for reporting the rumour about the use of nerve gas. Jennings then switches to ABC reporter, Cokie Roberts, in Washington, who states: "The mere fact we talked about it (nerve gas) makes the war more popular and anti-Iraq."

7:35 p.m. Zalmon Shoval, Israel's Ambassador to the USA, gives a press conference to announce that Iraqi missiles have caused six or seven minor injuries to civilians. No mention is made of chemical weapons.

This account is a very small segment of the live news coverage at the start of the Gulf War by all major networks in North America. It shows how powerful live TV news stories can be and how they can misinform as well as inform. When television presents live coverage of an event, there is a loss of editorial and writing controls so that scraps of information, even rumours picked up by reporters, can end up being reported. In this one example, millions of people probably believed that chemical weapons were exploding in the Middle East. Imagine the impact of this "news" on people with families in the war area.

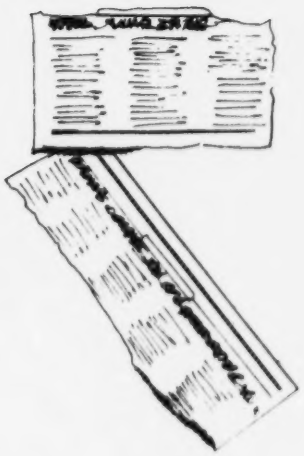
There is constant pressure on television reporters to keep the story going, even if there is nothing new to report. Real life and real wars do not conform to a TV script. The television medium thrives on current information, not on analysis or long-term understanding. The power of television is to show events as they occur. This is particularly true of natural and man-made disasters. No other medium can show the power of an erupting volcano or the flight of a missile as it hits a target. Yet, this preoccupation with sensational events is also television's weakness.

CURRENT AFFAIRS THROUGH THE PRINT MEDIA

Newspaper and periodical reports of current events are more detailed, varied and easier to use in the classroom. There is a variety of information from different sources that can be read at leisure and compared over time. There is a sense of a permanent record with the print media that is not apparent in the electronic media.

A selective examination of a few newspapers covering the Iraq war provides examples of the rich potential of using the print media. The stories sorted the events in proper order and presented news from all the key locations in the conflict. Well illustrated graphics showed the geography, troop strength and displacements, descriptions of armaments, along with political, economic and military analysis. This kind of information can easily be gathered and used to build arguments dealing with problems and issues raised by the war. Editorials, quotes from various sources and argumentative articles by columnists express points of view. The variety of sources alone provides fertile ground for analysis and interpretation.

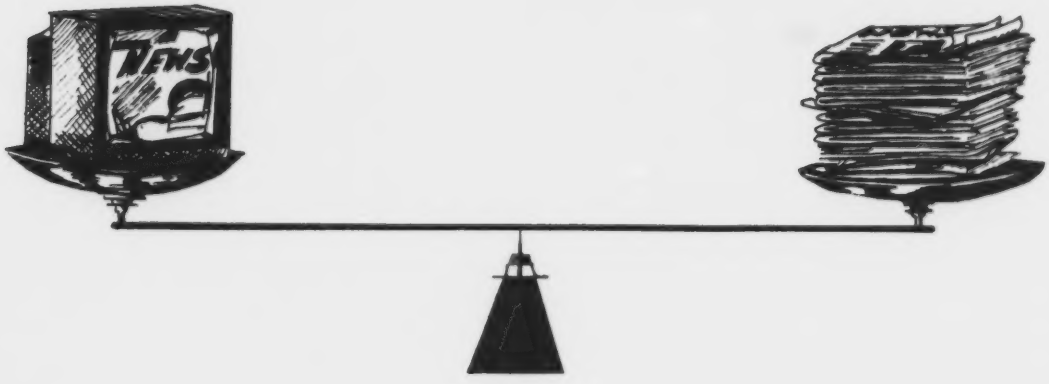
In the print media, there is time and space for detail. There is no such thing as "live" coverage; all stories have to be written first in order to be printed. Even the role of the media is subject to analysis. Judy Lindsay, a reporter for the *Vancouver Sun*, for example, wrote about war and the news business. Newspaper circulation jumped dramatically during the first few days of the Gulf War, and various newspapers ran extra copies, as shown in the following chart. As part of a current affairs study of the Gulf War, students could prepare a list such as this to show that the newspaper business thrives on disasters!



The Business Side of Reporting Major Events
Number of Extra Copies Printed

Paper	*January 17/91*	*January 18/91*
Vancouver Sun	35,000	10,000
L. A. Times	230,000	140,000
Washington Post	190,000	n/a
New York Times	50,000	82,000

Newspapers even find time and space to write about television's coverage of the war. Hester Riches' article, in the *Vancouver Sun* on January 19, 1991, "Horrors too real to miss on TV news", noted that the television network CNN had become a major carrier of news from the Gulf War. They were one of the last to leave Baghdad and sent out "sensational" pictures of reporters in Israel trying to put on their gas masks. The result was a greater market share of the viewing audience. In many cases, cable companies descrambled CNN to allow free viewing for the first two days of the war. By the third day of the war, Ms. Riches said, "We are getting used to it." The television business was returning to normal.



III SAMPLE STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL MINDEDNESS USING CURRENT AFFAIRS

Introduction

This section provides sample lesson plans for many of the topics or themes in the secondary social studies program. Each lesson is designed to develop students' critical thinking abilities by analyzing and evaluating current news stories. These skills include:

- distinguishing between facts and values
- determining the reliability of data
- determining the accuracy of data
- distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information
- detecting bias in materials
- identifying stated and unstated assumptions
- identifying ambiguous arguments
- recognizing inconsistencies in a line of reasoning
- determining the strength of an argument
- considering personal values as a guide to decision making
- examining and assessing a variety of viewpoints on issues before forming an opinion
- examining evidence and considering alternatives before making a decision
- identifying, using and evaluating various approaches to solve problems.

(from *Social Studies 10-20-30 Teacher Resource Manual*, 1990, p. 319)

Each lesson is also designed to develop other social studies skills—process skills, communication skills, participation skills, and inquiry skills. All of these skills are central to the Alberta social studies program (see Appendix B: Inquiry Strategies). Together, all skill areas are used to develop knowledge objectives related to various topics and themes within the secondary curricula.

Each lesson includes an overview that explains the strategy used, and provides a generic method for incorporating it into classroom instruction. Teachers may use the sample plans as they are or may adapt them to suit their own classroom situations.

SAMPLE LESSON 1:

ANALYZING AND EVALUATING CURRENT AFFAIRS NEWS REPORTS

Overview

To become effective citizens in a democracy, students must be able to analyze and evaluate sources of information about various problems, issues and events occurring locally, provincially, nationally and internationally, as reported to them through print and non-print media. They must develop "critical mindedness". They must make rational, not emotional, decisions about problems and issues occurring in their lives.

General Procedure

1. Select a number of news reports from a variety of sources (both print and non-print) related to one specific problem, issue or event which is very current and is related to the topic or theme being studied. For example, in Social Studies 30–33, you might select three newspaper articles from three different newspapers focusing on an event such as the latest round of Middle East peace talks.

2. Help students analyze and evaluate each of the news reports (see Student Printouts 1.1 and 1.2, pp. 10 and 13).

3. Discuss each news story to develop conclusions about its objectivity and/or point of view. Use the critical thinking skills listed on p. 21 to develop discussion questions (e.g., "What factual information is contained in the news story?" "How much of the information contained in the story is based on the reporter's values?").

4. Have students find a news story that is information-based and one that provides a point of view on the same event. Have them practise critical thinking skills by applying analysis and evaluation approaches (see No. 2 above).

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 9B:

Using Analysis and Evaluation Approaches to Examine Current Economic Issues in Russia (formerly a republic of the USSR)

Time: 1–2 class periods

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to help students become more critical minded in their examination of current news reports.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:
1. current economic conditions in the new country of Russia
2. the changes affecting consumers in Russia as it moves to a market-oriented economy.

Skills: Students will be able to:
1. read and interpret information in print sources
2. analyze and evaluate information sources to identify objectivity of data and point of view
3. participate in large group discussions.

Attitudes: Students will develop an appreciation for:
1. the importance of critically examining media news stories
2. the impact of rapid economic change on consumers.

Resources

- Assorted news reports of recent economic changes in Russia (print). For example:
  - "Russians knew prices had to jump"—*Calgary Herald* A4 Friday, January 3, 1992
  - "Russian shoppers learn new lessons"—*Calgary Herald* A4 Saturday, January 4, 1992
  - "Visitors eye zoo's rabbits"—*Calgary Herald* A4 Sunday, January 5, 1992.
- Editorial cartoon (overhead transparency)—*Calgary Herald* A3 Saturday, January 4, 1992.
- Approaches I and II (overhead transparencies). Refer to pp. 10 and 13.

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. Using an overhead transparency, show students the editorial cartoon. Using questions and answers, have students interpret the meaning of the cartoon and the point of view of the cartoonist. (Refer to p. 55 of this monograph for information on how to interpret cartoons.)

2. Discuss the cartoon with students, using the questions below as a guide:

   - Who is the cartoonist?
   - Where is he from?
   - Do you think he has been to Russia before?
   - Where did he get his information about the state of the Russian economy?
   - What type of information is presented in the cartoon? Is it factual or is it based on his opinion of the state of the Russian economy?

3. Explain to students that they will be examining news reports on the economic changes taking place in Russia to determine whether they are factual or based on a point of view (opinion). The purpose of this activity is to learn to analyze critically and evaluate news reports.

Developmental Activities

1. Distribute copies of the article "Russian shoppers learn new lessons". As they read, ask students to **underline** any factual information provided in the article and to **circle** any sources of information provided.

2. Using the overhead transparency of Approach I (Analyzing Factual News Reports), discuss the answers to each of the questions as they relate to the news story.

   - Main point/idea – There are shortages of food for Russian consumers; food prices are very high compared to prices in the pre–Gorbachev/Yeltsin era of traditional socialism.
   - Factual information – Consumers wait in long lines to purchase food; on January 2, 1992 (Thursday) the price of bread had risen from 50 kopicks to 2.55 rubles; cooperatives were selling pork at a higher price (250 rubles/kg) than state stores (60 kopicks/kg).
   - Sources of information – Elmer Smith, associate editor of *Philadelphia Daily News* opinion pages, on location in Moscow, Russia; Irena and Vlademir Kadulin, Muscovites.
   - Reliability of information – Smith provides very few concrete examples of consumer price changes; however, he predicts what might happen as a result of the transition from a Communist system to a market-oriented system. (If it works, consumers may get friendlier service and competitive prices. If it does not work, it could increase [consumer] pressure to return to traditional socialism.)

3. Ask students to develop a conclusion about the objectivity of this news report.

   It is somewhat objective in that:

   - the reporter is on location in Moscow
   - there are some facts provided
   - the actual comments of Muscovites are used.

   However, the author provides his own point of view on the mood of consumers, the quality of the consumer service, and on the possibilities for the economic future of Russia. This detracts from the objectivity of the news report.

4. Distribute copies of "Russia knew prices had to jump", p. 27. As students read, ask them to underline the argument made by the author and to put brackets around any evidence given to support the argument.

5. Using the overhead transparency of Approach II (Analyzing Point of View Reports), discuss the answers to each question as they relate to the news story.

   - Argument – Yeltsin's decision to let the marketplace determine prices of food [and other commodities] could "flush out" hoarded foodstuffs, and empty storage sheds kept full by farmers holding out for higher prices. With the privatization of land, the real test of the effectiveness of market food prices will come next summer and at harvest time.
   - Evidence – A Polish friend in Warsaw reports that while food is expensive, there is food to buy; reaction to market prices for food and other commodities in Poland has changed as more and better quality food/goods have appeared in the markets.

6. Ask students to evaluate the argument and evidence using the following questions:

   - Does the author provide enough evidence to support his argument?
   - Which information is relevant? Which is irrelevant?
   - What are the stated and unstated assumptions in the news report?
   - How consistent is his argument?
   - Is the argument ambiguous?
   - What are the author's values about economic decision making?
   - Do the author's personal values about economics bias his point of view?
   - How strong is the author's argument?

The argument presented in the article, in general, is very weak. There is a lack of evidence to support it; it is assumed that the market system will cure Russian economic ills; there is too much irrelevant information (Gorbachev), and the author presents a strong bias in favour of the market system. It does not present a balanced viewpoint on the current economic situation in Russia.

Culminating Activities

1. Distribute the article "Visitors eye zoo's rabbits" on p. 29 to each student. Have students read it and then choose the approach (I or II) most appropriate to analyzing and evaluating the article.

2. After students have completed their analysis and evaluation, briefly discuss their conclusions.

   - Approach I – Factual News Reports
   - Facts – 8 rabbits stolen in Kharkov zoo, Ukraine
     – 1 rabbit = 80/100 rubles
     – 25% of average monthly salary for worker
   - Sources – Associated Press, Moscow
     – Moscow radio
   - Reliability – quite high although reported from Russia not Ukraine

Evaluation

Evaluate student participation in activity.

Note: This lesson could be expanded to include non-print media items, using the same format outlined above. As well, the video "Only the News That Fits" (NFB kit, *The Media and Society)* could be shown to students. The video provides insight into how the evening news is often put together.

Russians knew prices had to jump

OTTAWA — In the Soviet Union, as it was called in the olden days, bread was so cheap that boys kicked the loaves around as substitute footballs.

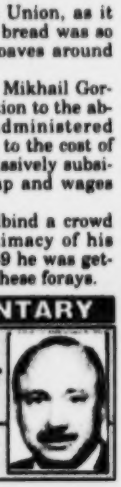
How long ago was it when Mikhail Gorbachev started drawing attention to the absurdities of his country's administered prices, which bore no relation to the cost of producing goods, but were massively subsidized to keep essentials cheap and wages low?

In 1988 he could still spellbind a crowd with the unprecedented intimacy of his presence among them. By 1989 he was getting too much abuse to make these forays.

COMMENTARY

Christopher Young

Southam News



The price of bread had not been raised for decades. Apartment rents were set when the blocks were built, and remained unchanged, a small fraction of their real value. No one, state or individual, spent the money needed to maintain and repair their crumbling common areas.

The first time I heard Gorbachev use the vivid example of bread-as-football, which was a fact as well as a metaphor, was during a period when he was popping up all over the vast country doing walkabouts in the streets of distant cities, engaging in stimulating dialogue with the citizens, who were not afraid to argue back.

There would be no advance notice that he was going to be in Krasnoyarsk or Volgograd, but we would watch the visits as lead items on Vremya, the national news, at 9 p.m. These dramatic impromptu debates would run for 20 or 30 minutes, sometimes more.

Gorbachev focused on the issue of prices and subsidies, aiming to get people used to the idea of coming change, trying to make them understand why large price increases for basic commodities would be necessary. When? After a certain amount of discussion, he would say, or after a certain number of months, or after the next party conference, or whatever, these changes would be made with the people's agreement.

Conditioned to believe that the state would always provide the basics of life cheaply enough for anyone to afford, the Soviet people didn't take kindly to the idea, despite promises that queues would disappear, and that the variety and quality of goods available would increase.

Gorbachev never did win the political consensus he needed to take this necessary step, as queues grew longer, shortages greater and hoarding massive. Boris Yeltsin won that consensus and the Russian presidency in a democratic election last June, and confirmed his popular support by his personal courage during the August coup.

Associated Press

COUNTING HIS MONEY: Man counts cash outside a Moscow market Thursday

A New Year's card from a Moscow friend contains this: "Here it's hot and getting hotter every day, we just don't know what else may happen tomorrow, people are hunting for food whether they really need it just in case. Many turned their apartments into storages of food!"

Yeltsin's decision to jump into the "cold bath" of market prices should flush out those apartments full of food, and empty the storage sheds kept full by farmers holding out for higher prices. Combined with privatization of land, if it works, the real test of the effectiveness of market food prices will come next summer and at harvest time.

In Poland, which took the cold bath three years ago, the first non-Communist government, elected in a frenzy of approval in June 1989, dropped steeply in popularity after the price increases that fall. Even fervent Solidarity supporters lost faith. But then, as more and better food and other goods appeared in the markets, reaction changed.

A Warsaw friend, whose reactions rode this roller-coaster exactly, was saying by mid-1990: "Well, it's expensive, but at least there's something to buy."

Her Christmas card this year ignored politics.

She told of redecorating her apartment, "although it also means spending a lot of money." Her main complaint was that she still had to go to her parents' apartment to use the phone.

"The government promised me a phone but . . . in a four years' time. Unfortunately it's still considered a luxury here in Poland."

A nuisance certainly, but meat is more important. My New Year's wish for the Russians is that they will be able to stop worrying about food shortages as quickly as the Poles did.

It will be a while before they all have phones.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Russian shoppers learn new lessons

By Elmer Smith

MOSCOW — Most of the people who form the long line across from the apartment building where I'm staying are young parents waiting to buy baby food. They don't look young.

Huddled against a blinding snowstorm with their collars pulled up around their ears and their boot tops meeting their coat hems, young and old, even women and men, all look alike.

"Two hours!" said Irina Kadulin, pointing from the window of her tiny kitchen to the line six floors below. "Two hours. Then, sometimes no baby food."

It's almost inescapable. At some point almost every day most Muscovites stand in line, sometimes for baby food, sometimes for bread. Sometimes it's for nothing because whatever it was they lined up for runs out before they reach the head of the line.

But a fast-moving line is not always a good sign, either. I watched people in one line move quickly into and out of a bakery because there was nothing to buy but small bags of bread chips — a snack food.

There were no lines outside the state food store on Bashilovskaya Street, a block from the three-room flat Irina and Vladimir Kadulin and their son, Ivan, are sharing with me. Since Dec. 30 the government store has had no lines — no lines, no meat, no bread.

No problem for Irina Kadulin, though. She prepared a breakfast of something that looks like a small potato pancake, which she makes by pan-frying some congealed milk curds.

It tastes like a bland cheese. But it's chewy and tasty with honey.

They hadn't been able to buy bread for two days. But Vladimir Kadulin had no trouble finding it on Thursday.

The problem Thursday wasn't finding food, it was paying for it. "He pay five times for it," Irina said. "We buy for 50 kopeks. Today we pay 2.55 rubles for same thing because it is Jan. 2."

And because this was the day when a massive bureaucracy that has subsidized everything from bubble gum to earth movers took off the training wheels and stood back to see if its new market economy would pedal a straight line or fall off to one side.

It was a shaky ride on this first day. Reporters and film crews from as far away as Tokyo spent the day filming and interviewing shoppers in Moscow's streets.

Associated Press

BUYER BEWARE: Food is plentiful in some markets but the costs are high

The mood grew uglier by degrees depending on how much more the shopper you interviewed was asked to pay. In some of the state-owned stores, the prices hadn't gone up much on some items.

Some of the so-called co-operatives, where enterprising Russians have been engaged in something like a market economy for several years, were charging more than the state.

One co-operative on Kutuzovski Prospekt sold pork by the kilogram for 250 rubles, which equals about three-quarters of the monthly salary of an average worker.

Less than two kilometres away in the centre of town, a state store sold kilograms of pork for 60 kopeks, less than 25 per cent of what the co-operative sold it for. Shoppers said the line was less than a half-hour long and there was a variety of cuts.

It could lead to a whole new phenomenon for most Russians — they may become real shoppers.

Comparative shopping is a luxury in a place where you may have to stand in line for an hour or more before you find out what the price is. And with price supports, it didn't much matter because the average worker could afford most staples.

So people don't shop, they just buy. A day in the marketplace is a new dreary experience. Store clerks are rarely friendly and sometimes surly. The concept of service is foreign.

Except at the McDonald's in Pushkin Square, where counter servers are taught to be polite, I have yet to see a clerk smile at a customer.

If they survive the experiment, the state stores may have to actually compete with the private businesses, and it could mean friendlier service, and ultimately, competitive prices. But if people are going to be asked to pay three-quarters of a month's pay for a few pork chops and a loaf of bread it could increase the pressure for a return to the pre-Gorbachev/Yeltsin era traditional socialism.

"I don't know what it means," said Irina Kadulin as she turned the loaf of bread in her hands. "How do people pay for this?

"How about pensioners? My mother? She gets only 170 rubles a month. How can she buy bread?

"People will be very angry. Who knows what will happen?"

(Smith is associate editor of the Philadelphia Daily News opinion pages.)

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Visitors eye zoo's rabbits

Associated Press, MOSCOW

The sharp increase in food prices across much of the former Soviet Union apparently has claimed its first victims: rabbits in a Ukrainian zoo.

Moscow radio reported Saturday that visitors to the zoo in Kharkov, Ukraine, "have begun to show heightened interest in its rabbits, especially just recently, since the rise in prices."

Eight rabbits were stolen from the zoo Friday night, it reported, noting that "at the market, the asking price for one bunny is between 80 and 100 rubles."

That's roughly 25 per cent of the average monthly salary for a worker.

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SAMPLE LESSON 2:

CURRENT AFFAIRS SCRAPBOOK

Overview

Scrapbooks help students organize and present large amounts of information on a particular current affairs topic. They can be used in every topic in the social studies program. Students in Grade 7 might use a scrapbook to present current information about their local culture (7A) or current multicultural problems/issues/stories of interest occurring in Canada (7C). Grade 8 students could use a scrapbook to organize current information about the geographic regions of Canada and the U.S. (8A). Students in Social Studies 30 might follow a political leadership race or a federal/provincial election.

General Procedure

1. Decide, prior to beginning a topic, on a broad area of study for students to pursue within that topic.

2. Decide on the rationale (purpose) for the study and objectives to be achieved by students. Use the following questions to assist you:

   - What is the purpose of this activity?
   - What knowledge will students acquire?
   - What skills will students explore?

3. Develop a plan for conducting the study, using the answers to the above questions. Be sure to include evaluation in your plan. Develop an assignment for students to complete.

4. Begin collecting resources well in advance of beginning the scrapbook activity. Work with the librarian.

5. Obtain scrapbooks—ask students to provide their own, provide them to students for a fee, or order them through your school budget if you are so fortunate. Gather glue sticks, rulers, scissors and other necessary supplies.

6. Teach or review applicable research skills. These might include finding information in newspapers and periodicals, or library research skills, such as the use of periodical indexes or clipping files. Ask your librarian for help.

7. Carefully explain the scrapbook assignment to students. Outline procedures and clarify "rules" related to the research activity (e.g., Will students be able to use xeroxed articles?).

8. Work closely with students as they complete the activity in the classroom and the library. Again, enlist the aid of the librarian.

9. Debrief. What knowledge did students acquire as a result of the activity? Skills? Attitudes?

10. Share the scrapbooks in some meaningful way—in the classroom, with other classes, or somewhere in the school.

11. Evaluate the process and the scrapbooks.

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 10B

Using a Current Affairs Scrapbook to Develop a Social Studies Concept

Time: ongoing, for 2–3 weeks (1–1½ class periods/week)

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to acquire information about each of Canada's regions in order to develop further the concepts of diversity, identity and unity.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:

1. the concepts of diversity, identity and unity
2. the economic, political and social/cultural issues/problems/events occurring in each of Canada's regions
3. the similarities and differences between each of Canada's regions that affect Canadian identity and unity.

Skills: Students will be able to:

1. conduct research in newspapers and periodicals to find current and relevant information about Canada's regions
2. organize and present information about each of Canada's regions, using a scrapbook format
3. analyze and evaluate information [contained in news articles] about each of Canada's regions
4. develop conclusions about the similarities and differences between the regions of Canada
5. explain in writing how to promote Canadian identity and unity
6. work cooperatively in triads to conduct research, complete scrapbooks, and develop conclusions.

Attitudes: Students will develop an appreciation for:

1. the diversity of activities occurring within each of Canada's regions
2. the similarities between regions which unite Canadians across the nation.

Resources

- Large collection of newspapers from across Canada (contact your local newspaper for addresses; request 3–5 copies of daily newspapers over a one-week period).
- Library resources—clipping files, periodicals.
- Assignment sheet.

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. Distribute an intact newspaper to each student in the class. Use these newspapers to conduct a quick review of newspaper research skills. For example:

    - the location of international, national, provincial and local news
    - specialty sections (business, home, classified, family, etc.)
    - the difference among an article, an editorial, a commentary, a letter to the editor
    - reading articles for information—title, byline, lead, sources
    - interpreting cartoons.

2. Review or teach students how to use the periodical index and how to find information in periodical articles.

Developmental Activities

1. Explain to students that they will be working cooperatively in triads (groups of 3). They will conduct research about current affairs—economic/political/social/cultural—related to each of Canada's regions and develop conclusions about problems, issues and events affecting Canadian identity and unity.

2. Distribute scrapbook assignment sheet and explain in detail.

3. Organize students into heterogeneous groups of 3 (triads) and have them begin working cooperatively to complete the scrapbook assignment (allow 1–1½ classes/week). Book the class into the library for at least one period to conduct periodical research.

4. Collect completed student scrapbooks.

5. Have students complete self and group evaluation of the research activity.

Culminating Activities

1. As a large group, discuss the results of student research. Use the following questions as a guide to discussion:

   - What, if any, differences exist between Canada's regions?
   - What is the term for these differences?
   - Why do these differences exist?
   - How do these differences affect Canadian identity?
   - How do these differences affect Canadian unity?
   - What possible solutions might there be to reducing the impact of differences that might negatively affect Canadian identity and unity?
   - Are these feasible and desirable?
   - What is the Canadian government currently doing to promote Canadian identity and unity?
   - What similarities exist between Canada's regions?
   - How do these similarities promote Canadian identity and unity?
   - How might Canadians use their similarities to achieve a stronger sense of national identity and unity?

2. After thoroughly discussing research findings, have students complete the following RAFTS assignment:

   As a Canadian citizen, write an open letter to all Canadians explaining how each citizen can promote Canadian identity and unity.

3. Collect RAFTS assignments for evaluation.

Note: Once scrapbooks have been evaluated, time should be put aside during a class for students to look at each other's work and see how different groups approached the assignment.

Evaluation

1. Cooperative group processes (refer to the social studies teacher resource manuals or *Together We Learn* for sample evaluation forms).

2. Completed scrapbooks.

3. RAFTS assignment (see page 126 in the *Junior High Social Studies Teacher Resource Manual*, 1989 for sample evaluation form).

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.3

CANADA'S REGIONS—CURRENT AFFAIRS ASSIGNMENT

Canada consists of six distinct regions—British Columbia, the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes and the North. Currently, each of these regions is undergoing economic, political and social/cultural change. The following activity is designed to help you investigate each of these regions to learn more about Canadian diversity, identity and unity.

A. Group Research—Gathering/Analyzing/Evaluating Information

1. Using newspapers and current periodicals (magazines), conduct research to find as many sources of information about each of Canada's regions as possible. These can include news articles, editorials, maps, pictures, charts, graphs and cartoons.

2. After reading or examining each item, use the approaches outlined below to decide on the best sources of information for your scrapbook.

Factual News Reports

1. What is the main point or idea?
2. What factual information is provided in the news report?
3. What are the sources?
4. Personal reflection.

Point of View Reports

1. What is/are the argument(s)?
2. What evidence is given to support the argument(s)?
3. How effective are the argument(s) and the evidence?

B. Organizing Information

Organize the sources of information about each of Canada's regions in a scrapbook, using the following format:

1. Title page - Regions of Canada—Diversity, Identity and Unity
2. Table of contents
3. Regions
   a. one section for each region (six in all):
      - title page
      - map of the region

b. each section subdivided into:
   - economic problems/issues/events
   - political problems/issues/events
   - social/cultural problems/issues/events

Note: A **minimum** of two sources of information for each subsection.

c. an analysis and evaluation of the information contained in the sources.

C. Synthesizing Information

1. Using the information in your sources, complete a comparison chart of the differences between Canada's regions, similar to the one below. Put your completed chart in your scrapbook. Do not forget to title your work.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CANADA'S REGIONS

	British Columbia	The Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	The Maritimes	The North
Economic						
Political						
Social/ Cultural						

2. Using the information in your sources, make a detailed list of all the **similarities** between Canada's regions: economically, politically, socially/culturally (a minimum of two per category). Put your completed list on a separate page in your scrapbook. Don't forget to title your work.

D. Developing Conclusions

1. Using the chart of differences and the list of similarities, develop ten conclusions about Canada's regions. Use the ideas of diversity, identity and unity to help develop your conclusions. An example of a conclusion is: "Each of Canada's regions has distinct economic activities (economic diversity)."

2. Put your conclusions on a separate page in your scrapbook. Don't forget to title your work.

E. Evaluation

1. Group research	•	self-evaluation		15 marks
	•	group evaluation		15 marks
2. Scrapbook	•	content:		
		– information sources	(15 × 6)	90 marks
		– differences charts	(3 × 6)	18 marks
		– similarities list	(2 × 3)	6 marks
		– conclusion	(10 × 2)	20 marks
	•	format:		
		– title pages	(7 × 2)	14 marks
		– maps	(6 × 2)	12 marks
	•	neatness and clarity		10 marks
				200 marks

Note: Your group will have to make arrangements to meet outside of class time to complete this assignment. Remember, this is a cooperative activity.

All members of each group are expected to contribute equally to the completion of this assignment.

SAMPLE LESSON 3:

SCULPTURING AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

Overview

Sculpturing is a unique and highly motivational technique that can be used by students in Grades 7 to 12 as they deal with current affairs problems, issues and events in all topics of the social studies program. In this strategy, students gain deeper insights into understanding the different perspectives held by major stakeholders in any given problem or issue. Sculpturing is also fun and provides a break from normal classroom routine.

General Procedure

1. Approximately two to three weeks prior to actually conducting the sculpture, choose a current affairs problem or issue that relates to the topic being studied. Collect newspaper or magazine articles dealing with the problem or issue—especially those that provide sufficient background information and/or provide as many perspectives from as many groups as possible. At various intervals, have students read these articles and then conduct a brief classroom discussion focusing on who, what, where, when, why and how questions. Encourage students to follow the problem or issue on television or radio news broadcasts as well. The object is for them to become as familiar with the problem or issue as possible **before** actually conducting the sculpture.

2. On the day of the sculpture, arrange the desks in the classroom into a large U-shape. Ask students to list as many of the major individuals/groups involved in the problem or issue as possible. List these on the blackboard.

   Note: This list must be compiled by the students themselves, **not** by the teacher. The teacher's role is that of facilitator **only**.

3. Ask students to choose who they think are the most important individuals/groups involved in the problem or issue. The purpose of this step is to make the sculpture manageable.

4. Ask for student volunteers to represent each of the most important individuals/groups. As each student volunteers, write the name of the individual or group being represented on a label and attach it to the volunteer in some manner.

5. Ask the remaining students in the classroom to decide on the following:

   a. where the volunteer should be placed in the classroom to show the symbolic impact of the person or groups being represented

   b. the physical stance the volunteer should take

c. the facial expression the volunteer should wear

d. the props the volunteer should be using (chairs, desks, rulers found in the classroom).

Once the class has agreed on the positioning of the volunteer, he or she is to remain frozen in that position as the rest of the sculpture is created.

Note: Again, the teacher is a facilitator only. Students must **at all times** have ownership and control of the sculpture they are creating.

6. Once the sculpture is complete, it is a good idea to take a few pictures which can be placed on a bulletin board.

7. The sculpture process should be debriefed after it is finished. Discuss such things as the emotions felt by the volunteers, the insights gained about different groups' perspectives on the problem/issue, or new understandings of the problem/issue as a whole.

8. The sculpture can be extended by "resculpturing". Ask students what they would like the problem or issue to look like in the future (e.g., in 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, 10 years). After completing the new sculpture, the class could discuss ways of moving from the initial sculpture to the new sculpture. (How can individuals, groups, nations, etc., involved in the problem or issue move from where they are now to where you think they should be in the future?)

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 10B:

Using Sculpturing to Develop an Understanding of Native Land Claims Issues in Canada

Time: approximately 2–3 weeks (15–20 minutes per class); actual sculpture takes one 60-minute period

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to use the technique of sculpture to deepen students' understanding of a current affairs issue.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:
1. the concepts of minority rights, cultural conflict, cultural sovereignty, majority rights, and constitutional issues
2. the causes of the Oka situation
3. the perspective of individuals and groups involved in the Oka standoff.

Skills: Students will be able to:
1. identify and describe the individuals and groups involved in the Oka situation and their different points of view on the Oka issue (land claims)
2. take part in a discussion of the Oka issue.

Attitudes: Students will develop an appreciation for:
1. the perspectives of both majority and minority groups in relation to Native land claims issues in Canada
2. the complexity of constitutional issues in a democratic nation (Canada).

Resources

- Assorted newspaper/magazine articles dealing with the Oka issue.
- Video clips—*CBC-TV News in Review*, etc.

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. a. Put the following questions on the board: Who? What? Where? Why? How? When? Ask students to provide information about the Oka situation as it relates to each question.

e.g., Who? Mohawk Indians (Warrior Society)
citizens of Oka
province of Quebec
federal government

Where? Oka, Quebec
Kahnawake Reserve at Oka
Akwesasne Reserve (Ontario)

b. Explain to students that over the next few weeks they will be adding to their knowledge of the Oka situation by examining various newspaper and magazine articles and viewing news clips related to the issue. In their notebooks, ask them to sketch in a retrieval chart (see sample below) which will help them to keep track of the information gained through their viewing, readings and discussions about the issue.

Groups Involved	Demands	Point of View	Actions Taken

c. Distribute to students an article that provides background information about the Oka issue. (An excellent article is "The Battle of Oka" in *Maclean's*, July 23, 1990, pp. 16–18.) Have them read the article in class.

d. Using the information from the article, have them fill in their retrieval charts. (Make sure they leave enough room to add information as it is acquired over the next few weeks.)

Developmental Activities

1. Periodically, over 2–3 weeks, provide students with brief articles that present the different perspectives of the major individuals and groups involved. Use the *CBC-TV News in Review* program on the Oka situation to provide non-print information on the issue.

2. Briefly discuss the new information or ideas presented and have students add this information to their retrieval charts. Relate this information to the concepts identified in the knowledge objectives.

3. Choose a class at the end of the 2–3 week information-gathering period and conduct the sculpture. Follow the procedure outlined in the generic lesson plan (pp. 38–39).

4. Collect completed retrieval charts for evaluation.

Culminating Activities

1. Once the sculpture is completed, debrief the class in a large group discussion.

   The following questions might be used to guide the discussion:

   a. How has your understanding of the Oka situation changed as a result of the sculpture?

b. Has there been a change in your attitude toward any of the groups or individuals involved?

c. How do you think Native issues should be dealt with in Canada? How are they currently being dealt with?

Evaluation

Evaluate completed (final drafts) of retrieval charts.

SAMPLE LESSON 4:

SYNECTICS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS: ENHANCING CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS

Overview

Synectics enhances creative thinking, specifically metaphoric thinking. The chief element in synectics is the use of analogies to develop concepts and to encourage creative approaches to problem solving. For detailed information on synectics, see pp. 159–183, *Models of Teaching* (1986), by Joyce and Weil.

It is difficult to find news stories that use analogies, but they occasionally appear in newspapers or periodicals. They provide a wonderful opportunity for students to work with current information in a unique manner.

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 9A or 30A/33A:

Using Synectics to Develop Market System Economic Concepts

Time: 1 class period (65 minutes)

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to use a current event (Halloween) as the basis for creating a direct analogy with the market system.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:

1. the basic concepts of the free market economic system—price, competition, supply and demand, efficiency, profit, etc.

Skills: Students will be able to:

1. use direct analogy to compare Halloween with the free market economic system
2. create their own direct analogy questions based on the free market system
3. write a paragraph describing a direct analogy of their own choice.

Attitudes: Students will develop an appreciation for:

1. creative approaches to thinking.

Resources

- "Halloween: A lesson in free enterprise", *Calgary Herald*, Saturday, October 27, 1990 (see p. 46).

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. On the board, or using an overhead transparency, ask students the question, "How is the sun like an orange?" Have students volunteer their responses. Encourage as much creative thinking as possible.

   e.g.,
   - It is round.
   - It is orange/yellow in colour.
   - It "squirts" gases and liquids.
   - Its surface is rough.
   - It provides a source of energy.
   - It is needed for good health.
   - Too much of it can make you sick.

2. Explain to students that the exercise they just completed was called synectics. They used a synectics activity called direct analogy (comparing two objects or ideas) to compare the sun to an orange.

3. Provide students with another opportunity to practise direct analogy before proceeding. Sample analogy questions might include:

   - How is the earth like an apple?
   - How is a family like a tree?
   - How is a revolution like a car? (Difficult but interesting.)
   - How is a nation like a person?

Developmental Activities

1. Distribute the article, "Halloween: A lesson in free enterprise" to students. Explain that the author of this article used an analogy to compare Halloween with the free enterprise market system. Ask them to sketch a comparison chart (see sample below) in their notebooks. While reading the article, they identify the concepts of the free enterprise system and the corresponding current traditions of Halloween, and put them on their charts.

How is Halloween like the free enterprise system?	
FREE ENTERPRISE CONCEPTS	HALLOWEEN TRADITIONS
• initiative	• must go door-to-door giving a pitch to each and every potential prospect
• competition	• little kids (cute), youth and beauty, eye-catching costumes
• etc.	•

2. Discuss the assigned activity with the class. Sketch the comparison chart on the board and ask students to provide information to fill it in. Make sure all parts of the analogy from the article are included.

Culminating Activities

1. Students should now have a very good grasp of the technique of direct analogy. Ask students to create a direct analogy question of their own based on the free enterprise system. List their questions on the board.
   e.g., • How is a hockey game like the free enterprise system?
   • How is dating like the free enterprise system?

2. Once the list is complete, ask each student to choose one question and complete a comparison chart similar to the one completed in the developmental activity.

3. Once the chart is completed, ask students to write one or two paragraphs (or more) describing their direct analogy. Ask volunteers to read theirs to the class when all students are finished.

Evaluation

1. Direct analogy comparison chart.

2. Paragraphs.

HALLOWEEN: A lesson in free enterprise

☐ Networking, market analysis, especially packaging play role

By Katy Parisi
(New York Times Syndicate)

It's spooky how misunderstood Halloween is.

Forget all the hocus-pocus about witches and goblins. The true purpose of Halloween is much more spirited than that. It is to teach children the finer points of that most cherished heritage: the free-enterprise system.

Halloween is the only holiday that approaches the reality of the business world. Other holidays feature a freeloader aspect: Ask of Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny and you receive. The goods arrive delivered to your home, even if you have not held up your end of the bargain by being a good little boy or girl.

But Halloween forces children to show a little initiative in earning their treats. It demands they go door-to-door giving a pitch to each and every potential prospect. Their costumes may vary in style, but on Halloween every kid is really dressed as the classic American salesman.

Long before he's old enough for business college, the successful Halloweener realizes that he needs to size up and outdo his competition. If this were any other holiday, goodies would be doled out on an impartial basis, but not on Halloween.

Little kids get their treats simply because they are so cute; youth and beauty always have held a bewitching edge in the marketplace. Others get a goodly share of treats by coming up with eye-catching costumes; packaging is paramount.

The question of costume forces the Halloweener into certain marketing decisions. Should he stick by last year's model with a few innovations? Or should he go for something totally new and free-spirited? Either way, will it work? There is a scary line in any business between being hailed as an innovator and being viewed as an empty pumpkin head.

As he faces these grave issues, the young entrepreneur struggles with the question that has always haunted business people: What will capture the fancy of the public?

The truly experienced pro uses savvy instead of relying on style alone. Knowing the history of the market is essential. Any kid worth his candy corn knows from previous campaigns which prospects should be targeted and how.

At the top of the list are the blue chips, the ones who hand out the biggest dividends. These are visited first while the stock is still available.

After that the dependable middle market is covered to fill out the supply. Finally, the Halloweener turns to the unknown households in his area to do his cold calling.

But the market changes from year to year. The good business person must keep his prospect list current. Blue chips might move out of the territory or one of last season's cold calls may have yielded a winner.

Networking is crucial. Miniconventions are held on playgrounds as the upcoming market season is analysed and evaluated.

Mass-marketing is as important as targeting. Youngsters who never have heard of efficiency studies do them effortlessly around Oct. 31.

They realize that the most loot can be gotten by canvassing as many houses as possible in the least amount of time. High-density neighborhoods become the favourite haunts of trick-or-treaters.

The canvassing phase of the business is one area in which age and experience pay off: Older legs are longer and can cover more territory in less time. Also, parents of oldtimers will let them roam more freely than their younger rivals.

These same parents, unfortunately, can present management with problems that hinder a successful operation. They often demand that older trick-or-treaters take along younger siblings.

While the little ones can't be left on their own, they interfere with the pace. Thus the future entrepreneur learns the problems of child care: Everyone wants it but no one wants to provide it.

When the sales operation is completed it is time for a practical exercise in how to invest the profits. The Halloweener who consumes all his earnings in a one-night spree has no right to bellyache later on.

But they still should have some disposable income that can be used to trade up. How many sticks of chewing gum is one chocolate bar worth? The answer lies in what the market will bear. Candy or commodities, the principle is the same.

What is learned on Halloween may be sugarcoated but it is not all make-believe. It is a training exercise for the perilous passage from childhood into a scenario that is much scarier than any witch could conjure up: real life.

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SAMPLE LESSON 5:

CONSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

Overview

The social studies program offers endless opportunities for students to explore controversial issues on a local, provincial, national or international basis level. In the classroom, an issue is "controversial" when there is significant disagreement among students; that is, incompatibility among students' ideas, information, conclusions, opinions and theories. Generally, students want to argue their positions from an emotional, irrational perspective. For the most part, this does not lead to increased understanding or appreciation for the perspectives held by others.

A more rational or constructive approach is to use **academic conflict** (constructive controversy). This approach achieves four major objectives:

- a desire to learn more facts about an issue (rather than opinions)
- the development of conflict **between ideas**
- the articulation of students' positions and rationales
- the development of deeper understandings of many perspectives on an issue.

General Procedure

Step 1 CHOOSE DISCUSSION TOPIC
Criteria for selection:
a. at least two well-documented positions
b. content is manageable for students.

Step 2 PREPARE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
- Provide a clear ***description of the group's task***.
- Provide a ***description of the phases of the controversy procedure*** and the collaborative skills to be used during each phase.
- Provide a ***definition of the positions*** to be advocated, with a summary of the key arguments supporting each.
- Provide a ***set of resource materials*** that support and elaborate on the arguments for each position.

Step 3 STRUCTURE THE CONTROVERSY
- Teach necessary collaborative skills.
- Assign students to heterogeneous groups of 4.
- Divide each group into 2 pairs who are assigned opposing positions on the topic to be discussed.
- Distribute resource materials to each pair ("pro" to one pair, "con" to the other).
- Require each group to reach a consensus and turn in a group position paper, on which all members will be evaluated.

Step 4 CONDUCT THE CONTROVERSY
• Refer to p. 51 of this monograph.

Based on the work of Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1986), *Academic Conflict Among Students: Controversy and Learning*, in Feldman, R. edit. *Social Psychology of Education*, Cambridge University Press, p. 205. Adapted with permission by Ron Windrum, Henry Wise Wood High School, Calgary, Alberta.

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 30A:

Using Constructive Controversy to Examine an Economic Issue

Time: 1 week

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to examine alternative points of view on an economic issue facing Canadian chicken producers.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:
1. the concepts of supply and demand in a market system
2. the concept of supply management as it exists in Canada
3. the arguments and evidence for and against supply management in Canada.

Skills: Students will be able to:
1. use constructive controversy to argue alternative positions
2. take a position and defend it in a well-written position paper.

Attitudes: Students will develop an appreciation for:
1. alternative points of view on an economic issue
2. the economic situation of agricultural producers (farmers/ranchers) in Canada
3. the economic situation of food processors in Canada.

Resources

- "Why Chickens Don't Come Cheap", Report on Business Magazine (Globe and Mail), October 1990, p. 87.
- "Something to Crow About", Report on the Success of Supply Management in the Canadian Chicken Industry—Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency, October 1988, pp. 3–14. Available from Alberta Chicken Producers Marketing Board, Suite 101, 11826 – 100 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 0K3, telephone: 488–2125.
- "Poultry, egg boards fear trade pact consequences", *Calgary Herald*, January 8, 1992, B8, and "GATT target mid-April", *Calgary Herald*, January 11, 1992, E3 (see p. 53).

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. Divide the class into four equally sized groups and assign the following roles — group 1: chicken producers; group 2: fried chicken franchise owners; group 3: further chicken processors (Campbells, Swansons TV dinner, etc.); and group 4: chicken consumers.

2. Distribute the following scenario to students.

   Imagine that you live in a nation that practises **pure price system** economics. In such a system, the market forces of supply and demand, price, competition, efficiency and profits determine what will be produced, how much will be produced and who will receive the benefits of production. Each one of you has been assigned a role that is in some way related to the production of chicken. In your group, answer the following questions, keeping in mind your assigned role at all times.

   a. What is your primary goal in relation to the price of chicken?

   b. How might a high price for chicken affect you? Think of as many answers as possible.

   c. How might a low price for chicken affect you? Think of as many answers as possible.

   d. What steps might you take to get the best price possible for chicken?

3. Have each group report its answers. Through discussion, students should begin to understand that the price the chicken producer gets for his product will determine the supply of chicken—whether there is a surplus or shortage. This in turn affects consumers and chicken processors in significant ways.

Developmental Activities

1. Using a brief lecture format, describe the method used by Canadian chicken producers to alleviate the problem (supply management):

   - Consists of producer-controlled agencies and marketing boards in each province that set prices and determine supplies for their products (eggs, poultry, dairy).
   - Federal government supports supply management by setting import quotas to restrict international competition.

- Purpose is to regulate production to ensure steady supplies, stable prices and the continued existence of the Canadian family farm.
- Criticism comes from the food processing industry, some chicken producers, and nations who want access to the Canadian chicken market.

2. Explain that students will be using a technique called **constructive controversy** to investigate both sides of the issue: Should the supply management system of chicken production be continued in Canada? Explain process (on p. 51) to students.

3. Distribute Student Printout 1.5 and resource materials. Make sure students understand their task. Allow students adequate time to prepare for and conduct the controversy and at least one class period to work on their position papers. Collect papers 3–4 days after they have completed the controversy assignment.

4. Consider inviting guest speakers to discuss supply management. Guest speakers are readily available from the Alberta Chicken Producers Marketing Board. A business person involved in the chicken processing industry might also be invited to provide an interesting debate.

Culminating Activities

1. Explain that chicken producers face growing international pressures to end supply management in the poultry industry in Canada. International delegates to the Uruguay Round of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) talks, which began in 1986, see supply management as a method of subsidizing poultry and other farmers.

2. Distribute articles "GATT target mid-April" and "Poultry, egg boards fear trade pact consequences" to students (pp. 53–54). Have students analyze the articles, using Approaches I and/or II (refer to pp. 10 and 13 of this monograph). Discuss students findings.

Note: Students should be encouraged to keep track of the GATT negotiations as well as the impact of deals made on agriculture industries involved in supply management.

Evaluation

1. Group processes (see Senior High or Junior High Social Studies Teacher Resource Manuals).

2. Position paper (use Social Studies 30 diploma examination specifications).

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.4

CONSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY ASSIGNMENT

Preamble

The Uruguay Round of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) talks are taking place in Belgium. GATT Article II allows supply management—and it allows import controls to support supply management programs. However, supply management in Canada is being threatened.

Producers of chicken in Canada are watching negotiations to ensure that supply management is preserved in this country. They feel that it best serves the interests of producers and consumers by ensuring a fair return on the producer's investment and stable prices and supplies for consumers and chicken processors.

Others (especially those in the food processing industry) would like to see supply management abandoned at the talks. They would like to see an end to federal government quotas which would then allow them to purchase cheaper imports from other countries (like the USA). They also argue that chicken producers are manipulating supply to keep prices high in Canada.

Instructions

You have been given resource information that **supports one position** on the issue:

Should the supply management system of chicken production be continued in Canada?

- Read this information and then, working with your partner, prepare to conduct a constructive controversy with the other two individuals in your group. (They have an alternative position on this issue!)
- Follow the steps on the Student Printout 1.5 titled *Conducting Constructive Controversy*.
- Once your group has reached a decision, write a group position paper.
- You will be evaluated on your participation in the constructive controversy (25 marks). Your group's position paper will also be evaluated (30 marks).

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.5

CONDUCTING CONSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY

A. PLAN POSITIONS

- What ***arguments*** will you use to uphold your position?
- What ***evidence*** will you use to support your arguments?

B. PRESENT POSITIONS

- Present your position as a pair, being forceful and persuasive.
- Listen carefully to the opposing position, taking notes as necessary.

C. ARGUE THE ISSUE

- Present as many facts as you can to support your point of view.
- Critically listen to the opposing pair's position, asking for facts that support their point of view.
- Try to think of arguments that counter the opposing view.
- Present view.
- Work as a group to learn as many facts from both sides as you can.

D. PRACTISE PERSPECTIVE REVERSAL

- Working in pairs, present the opposing pair's position as if you were them.

E. REACH A DECISION

- Drop the advocacy of your position.
- Summarize the best arguments for both points of view.
- Change your mind only when the facts and rationale clearly indicate that you should.
- Reach a consensus on the issue.
- Write out the supporting evidence and rationale for the synthesis your group has agreed on.

Based on the work of Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1986), *Academic Conflict Among Students: Controversy and Learning*, in Feldman, R. edit. *Social Psychology of Education*, Cambridge University Press. Adapted with permission by Ron Windrum, Henry Wise Wood High School, Calgary, Alberta.

GATT target mid–April

By Randall Palmer
(Reuters)

GENEVA — GATT chief Arthur Dunkel on Friday set a new deadline of mid-April to conclude the long-running Uruguay Round of global trade talks.

A successful end to the negotiations, begun in 1986 and now more than a year beyond the original target for conclusion, is widely seen as vital for the world economy.

Diplomats said the next three months would be marked by fierce wrangling, especially on the question of reducing levels of farm subsidies.

But Dunkel, speaking at a news conference, sounded optimistic, saying everyone wants to conclude the talks.

"On the basis of the consultations I have had, there is a basis for consensus to enter the final sprint," said Dunkel, director general of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. "The round should finish . . . before Easter (April 19)."

Dunkel submitted a 450-page draft agreement, covering everything from services and intellectual property rights to agriculture, to the 108 participants on Dec. 20. It was informally billed as a take-it-or-leave-it package.

Delegates are due to give their governments' initial responses at a meeting in Geneva on Monday, but Dunkel, aiming to take any drama out of the situation, said the encounter would not make or break the round.

"This is obviously not going to be the 'crunch session' that many people had been predicting," one senior trade source said.

Dunkel said the question he would put on Monday was: "Have we reached the stage in the round when we can decide to conclude in the next weeks?"

What was unclear was the extent to which countries would be allowed to insist on changes in the substance of Dunkel's draft agreement.

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Poultry, egg boards fear trade pack consequences

By Duncan Thorne
(Edmonton Journal)

EDMONTON — Alberta poultry and egg boards are warning that their industry will be devastated if Canada accepts a compromise international trade agreement.

But provincial Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley says prairie grain farmers risk losing the export markets that are their life-blood if Canada rejects the trade deal.

Ottawa must compromise on protections for egg and poultry boards because it bungled its negotiating position, Isley said Tuesday.

The so-called feather-industry boards questioned Isley's commitment to their sector after the minister predicted the deal under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade will go ahead.

In place of the import quotas that have protected the poultry and dairy industries, there will be limited tariffs with a phaseout schedule, Isley told Unifarm's annual convention.

"Do you support all Alberta farmers or just certain segments of Alberta farmers?" Vern Crawford, past chairman of the Alberta Hatching Egg Marketing Board, asked Isley.

Crawford said Isley privately assured the boards he was fully behind Canada's effort to defend import quotas — only to criticize it publicly last month as inconsistent with its push for fewer trade obstacles in other sectors.

"We'd have to drop our commodity prices by about 37 per cent immediately (under the compromise plan)," Crawford said. "That would be disastrous to our industry."

He told reporters his concern with Isley "is that sometimes he tells the industry one thing and in public it comes out as another."

Greg Smith, secretary-manager of the Alberta Turkey Growers Marketing Board, said his industry has a study showing the proposed GATT compromise would — in a worst-case scenario — "be totally devastating for western producers."

Isley said he could live with Canada's negotiating stance in favour of import quotas "if possible" but doubted the position would win international support.

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SAMPLE LESSON 6:

USING CARTOONS TO UNDERSTAND CURRENT AFFAIRS ISSUES

Overview

Cartoons are an interesting way to motivate students to learn about current affairs issues. They are also a valuable resource for identifying different points of view or perspectives. Cartoons help students explore a wide range of perspectives on politics, economics and social culture. This is very important in the development of critical mindedness.

It is relatively easy to implement the use of cartoons into classroom instruction.

General Procedure

1. Decide on a current issue related to the topic being studied; e.g., 7–C bilingualism, 8–C Brazilian rainforest, 20–B global issues.

2. Begin collecting cartoons related to the issue. Journals, magazines and books contain cartoons related to enduring issues such as the environment. Enlist the support of your librarian in finding cartoons. You might also assign students the task of finding cartoons related to the issue **before** you deal with the issue in the classroom. **You should attempt to find as many cartoons as possible representing a wide range of perspectives on the issue.**

3. Use one cartoon as an opening activity to introduce students both to the issue and to a method of interpreting a cartoon's point of view and meaning (see No. 3 in the sample lesson on p. 57).

4. Have students practise the above skills by interpreting a number of cartoons representing different points of view and meanings. These could be provided by you, or students could find cartoons of their own.

5. Provide students with articles that provide additional information about the issue, or have them research it on their own. This activity should be carefully structured.

6. Have students take a position on the issue based upon the information they have acquired. Then have them design their own cartoon representing this position.

7. Have them share their cartoons with the other members of the class, explaining their position and the way in which they chose to illustrate it.

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 9C/33A:

Using Cartoons to Examine the GST Issue

Time: 2–3 class periods

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to use cartoons to examine different points of view held by various individuals and groups on the Goods and Services Tax (GST) issue.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:

1. the government's role in a mixed economy
2. the Goods and Services Tax — its definition, purpose and potential impact on Canadians
3. the different points of view held by various groups and individuals about the GST.

Skills: Students will be able to:

1. conduct research to find examples of cartoons related to the GST
2. interpret cartoons to find explicit and implicit meanings
3. interpret cartoons to identify different points of view
4. design a cartoon that illustrates their own point of view on the GST issue
5. present their cartoon to the class, explaining their interpretation of the GST and their point of view.

Attitudes: Students will develop an appreciation for:

1. the complexities of economic issues in a democratic, mixed economy
2. the different points of view on economic issues held by Canadians
3. the difficulty in finding solutions to economic issues in a nation.

Resources

- Sample cartoon: "In With the New"—*Calgary Herald*, December 28, 1990, A4.
- Assorted newspapers from across Canada (collected during and prior to this lesson).
- "The New Tax Bite", *Canada and the World*, December 1990, pp. 6–9.
- Federal government publications outlining the GST (available from Revenue Canada or other related government departments). Have your librarian obtain these for you.
- Student Printout 1.6, Cartoon Interpretation Assignment (see p. 60).

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. Distribute copies of the cartoon on the GST to students. Ask students to examine it carefully—especially the pictures, symbols and words/captions.

2. Ask students the following questions:

   a. What issue is this cartoon commenting on? How do you know this?

   b. Who are the individuals being portrayed in the cartoon? What or whom do they represent?

   c. Why is the baby portrayed as a devil?

   d. What does the old man mean when he says "Yeah . . . hike to 9% . . . then to 13% . . . then 17%"?

   e. What is the point of view or opinion about the GST presented in the cartoon?

3. Explain to students that they will be learning the skills needed to interpret cartoons; how to identify their meanings and points of view. These skills will then be used to interpret cartoons that focus on the issue of the GST. Using the overhead projector or blackboard, outline the four key elements of most cartoons—inferred (hidden) meanings, literal meanings, captions and symbols. Explain what each means in relation to the cartoon, using the examples from the opening activity.

   - inferred meanings – Ideas that are hidden or suggested through the use of pictures, words, symbols, etc. For example, "hike to 9% then 13%" means the government will keep raising it.
   - literal meanings – Statements based on some fact or set of facts. (In this example, there are no literal meanings.)
   - captions – Titles or words used in the cartoon to help explain the ideas being presented. For example, "Relax . . . It'll **grow** on you . . . " is used to help explain the criticism that the GST will not stay at 7% as has been promised by the federal PC government.
   - symbols – Anything used to represent ideas or important individuals in a cartoon. For example, the portrayal of the "baby" GST as the devil, to show the GST as "evil".

Each of these elements is combined to show the cartoonist's point of view. The cartoonist is most likely opposed to the GST because he feels it will not remain at 7% but will continue to rise as the government seeks more revenue from Canadians.

Developmental Activities

1. Chances are that students are not very well informed on the GST issue. At this point, students should acquire some basic information about the GST — its definition, its purpose, and its pros and cons. Students should read articles such as "The new tax bite", *Canada and the World*, December 1990, pp. 6–9, which provides eight criticisms of the GST, as well as government publications which explain the tax from their point of view. Students should be asked to answer questions about each article to ensure they acquire enough background information on the GST to proceed to the next stage of the lesson.

2. Divide students into pairs and distribute newspapers equally among them. Have them research the newspapers, looking for cartoons that focus on the GST (editorial cartoons, Ben Wicks, the Outcasts, etc.). They **must choose two** that show different perspectives on the GST issue.

3. Distribute the cartoon interpretation handout and have students complete the questions.

4. Assign each student the task of creating his or her own (original) cartoon relating to the GST. Their cartoons must contain **all four** of the key elements of a good cartoon. Encourage them to relate their cartoon in some way to the concept of Canada's mixed economy by assigning bonus marks. Explain that each cartoon will be presented to the whole class as well.

Culminating Activities

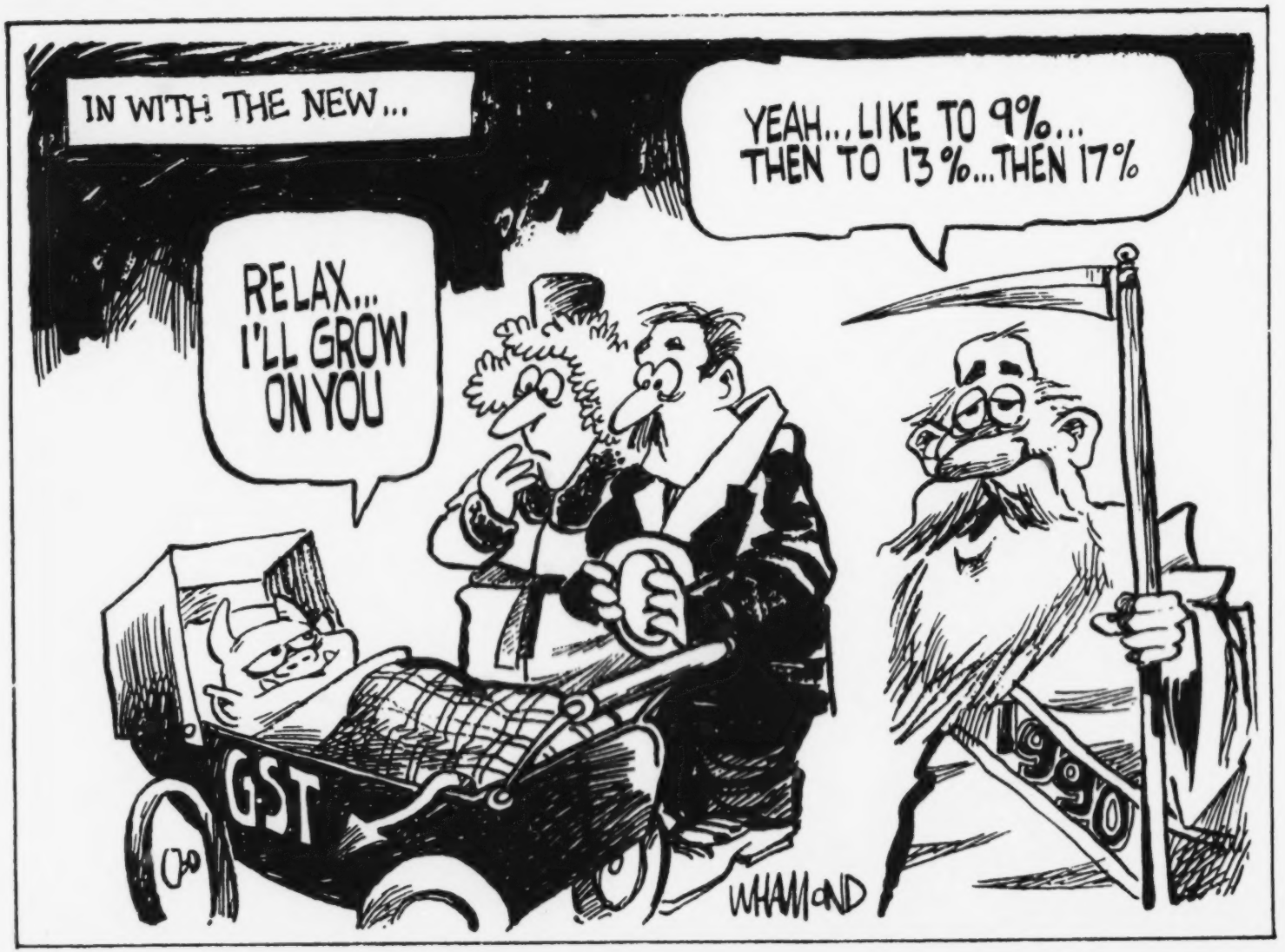
1. Have individual students present their cartoons to the whole class. After each is presented, create a bulletin board display of the cartoons for all students to look at more closely.

Evaluation

1. Questions from the Cartoon Interpretation Assignment.

2. Cartoons created by students.

3. Presentation of the cartoons.



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STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.6

CARTOON INTERPRETATION ASSIGNMENT

Use full sentences to answer these questions.

1. What are the **inferred meanings** (hidden) in the cartoons you have chosen?

Cartoon A _____

_____

_____

Cartoon B _____

_____

_____

2. What are the **literal meanings** (factual) in the cartoons you have chosen?

Cartoon A _____

_____

_____

Cartoon B _____

_____

_____

3. How do the **captions** help explain the ideas being presented?

Cartoon A _____

_____

_____

Cartoon B _____

_____

_____

4. What **symbols** are used and what do they represent?

Cartoon A _____

_____

_____

Cartoon B _____

_____

_____

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.6 (continued)

5. What is the cartoonist's **point of view** in the cartoons?

Cartoon A:

Cartoon B:

SAMPLE LESSON 7:

USING CURRENT AFFAIRS TO DEVELOP RESEARCH SKILLS

Overview

Having students investigate current problems or issues is an excellent method of developing their research skills and abilities. It is easy to use current affairs to achieve these objectives. The following research assignment sheets provide examples of how to structure simple library research activities based on the study of current problems or issues related to a particular topic or theme in the social studies program.

General Procedure

1. Identify as many problems or issues as possible related to the topic or theme being studied. A brainstorming session followed by a brief discussion of the suggestions would achieve this goal.

2. Review library research skills—especially locating information, and using periodical indexes and clipping files.

3. Distribute the appropriate assignment sheets—for problem solving or decision making—and review the requirements for each (see Student Printouts 1.7 and 1.8, pp. 63–66).

4. Conduct research in the library (1–2 classes).

5. Have students use the information they have collected to complete a related assignment. For example, students could write an essay, a position paper, or they could make formal oral presentations to the class about their findings.

   Note: This final step is very important. Students must perceive a purpose for conducting research.

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.7

SAMPLE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT — DECISION MAKING

1. What issue have you chosen? Use full sentences to answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. List the titles, authors, sources, dates and page numbers of **three** sources of information you found related to your issue.

	Title	Author	Source	Date	Page
a.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Explain what your issue means. (What is it about?) Use full sentences to answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Identify two (or more) different points of view related to your issue. Use full sentences.

Point of View 1: _____

_____

_____

_____

Point of View 2: _____

_____

_____

_____

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.7 (continued)

5. How might this issue affect the majority of Canadians? Be specific. Use full sentences.

6. How might this issue affect you? Be specific. Use full sentences.

7. What part does the government currently play in this issue? Use full sentences.

8. What part do you think the government should pay in resolving this issue? Explain. Use full sentences.

9. What part do you think **you** should play in resolving this issue? Explain. Use full sentences.

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.8

SAMPLE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT — PROBLEM SOLVING

1. What problem have you chosen to research? Use full sentences to answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. List the titles, authors, sources, dates and page numbers of at least **three** sources of information you found related to your issue.

	Title	Author	Source	Date	Page
a.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Explain what your problem means. (What is it about?) Use full sentences to answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Explain how this problem developed. (Why is it a problem?) Use full sentences to answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. List at least three examples of factual information (statistics, for example) which illustrate why there is a problem. Use full sentences.

Example 1: _____

Example 2: _____

Example 3: _____

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.8 (continued)

6. Identify at least two solutions to this problem. Use full sentences.

Solution 1: _____

Solution 2: _____

Solution 3: _____

7. Which solution do you feel is the best? Give reasons for your choice. Use full sentences.

_____

_____

_____

_____

SAMPLE LESSON 8:

USING CURRENT AFFAIRS TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS

Overview

The print media, especially newspapers and periodicals, often have articles that provide two or more well-developed perspectives on a current affairs issue. These give students an opportunity to examine perspectives critically, using Approach II: Analyzing Point of View Reports (p. 13).

Once this examination is complete, students can be asked to take a position on the issue and defend it in writing. Grade 7 social studies students could examine a local issue—for example, the debate over fluoridated drinking water in Calgary—and then be asked to write a paragraph or two explaining which position they agree with and one or two reasons why they support this position. Social Studies 10 students could examine the current constitutional issue facing Canadians, and then be asked to write a formal essay (not only taking a position and defending it but also providing some evidence to support their defence). By the time students reach Social Studies 30, they should be able to take a more sophisticated approach to their writing. After critically examining a current affairs issue (for example, the role of NATO in a post-Cold War era), students could be asked to write a position paper that shows a complete definition of the issue (its importance, the dilemma, the underlying premises and values of each position, assumptions, and a personal position defended with well-developed arguments and supporting evidence).

General Procedure

1. Begin gathering articles that present clear perspectives, with supporting arguments and evidence, on issues related to the topics or themes being studied. Make sure they are appropriate to the reading abilities of students.

2. Engage students in classroom activities whereby they acquire information about the issue they will be examining. Cartooning, scrapbook development, analysis and evaluation of news articles and non-print media and research might be used.

3. Once students have sufficient background information about the issue, distribute the articles collected in Procedure No. 1 above. Have students read these to identify the writer's position, arguments and supporting evidence. Use Approach II: Analyzing Point of View Reports (p. 13) to complete analysis of the articles.

4. Assign the writing activity using the writing process.

   a. Prewriting – Students could complete a retrieval chart (or other prewriting activity) showing different perspectives (including their own), arguments for each, and supporting factual evidence.

b. Writing – Students complete a first draft of their writing assignment.

c. Postwriting – Students use peer editing and revision to identify strengths and weaknesses in the first draft. Students then rework their first drafts and share their writing with their peers after the assignment is complete.

5. Have students periodically re-examine the issue to find out about current developments related to it.

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 30B:

The Persian Gulf War: A Position Paper

Time: approximately 1 week

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to use current affairs critically, to examine alternative points of view on an international relations issue and to develop students' writing abilities.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:
1. the concepts of internationalism (global collective security) and nationalism (national prestige, conflict, power, regional security)
2. the arguments and evidence for and against US involvement in the Persian Gulf Crisis.

Skills: Students will be able to:
1. develop a retrieval chart illustrating alternative points of view on an issue
2. analyze position papers to identify:
   a. the definition of the issue (importance, dilemma, underlying assumptions, principles, beliefs)
   b. the defence of the position taken (arguments)
   c. the evidence linking the arguments to the position
3. take a position on the issue and defend it in a well-written position paper.

Attitudes: Students will develop an appreciation for:
1. the complexity of international issues
2. the variety of alternative points of view on international issues.

Resources

- "A Case for War", *Newsweek*, October 29, 1990, pp. 28–30.
- "A Case Against War", *Newsweek*, October 29, 1990, pp. 24–26.
- Retrieval chart (see p. 71).
- Video clip—*CBC-TV News in Review*.
- Group evaluation (refer to the social studies teacher resource manuals).
- Peer revision sheet (see p. 72).

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. Discuss the Persian Gulf Crisis in an attempt to find out what students know about it and to add to their understanding of the issue. The following questions might be used to guide the discussion:

   a. What nations are involved in the PGC?

   b. Where are these nations located? (Use a wall map and have students locate them.)

   c. How did the PGC begin?

   d. Why did Hussein invade Kuwait?

   e Why is the international community involved in the PGC?

   f. Why might the USA be so heavily committed to resolving the PGC?

2. Show students a brief clip from the CBC National or *CBC-TV News in Review* which provide sufficient background information on the Persian Gulf Crisis and its latest developments.

Developmental Activities

1. Explain that students will be examining two position papers from *Newsweek* magazine which take differing points of view on the issue: "Should the USA go to war against Iraq?"

2. Distribute articles to students. Have them read each article and, while doing so, underline the main arguments presented for each position taken and place an E beside the evidence used to support the arguments.

3. Once the articles have been read, explain that students will be working cooperatively in pairs. They will be examining the two papers in order to complete a retrieval chart analysis of the two position papers. Group performance will be evaluated.

4. Distribute retrieval charts and group evaluation sheets. Explain how to complete the chart (a brief review of the elements of a position paper is a good idea at this point). Make sure students understand what will be evaluated. Assign individuals to pairs and allow sufficient time for completion. Conduct the evaluation once complete.

Culminating Activities

1. Using the completed retrieval chart, each individual student is to write a position paper on the issue: Should the USA go to war against Iraq? Allow two to three days for students to complete their first drafts.

2. Group students with their initial partners and have them complete a peer revision (edit each other's first drafts, using a peer revision sheet).

3. Using the suggestions for revision, encourage students to rewrite a final draft of their paper. Allow one to two days for completion.

4. Have students exchange and read one or two papers on the day they are due. This allows them to see how other students approached the position paper and to examine different writing styles.

Evaluation

1. Retrieval charts.

2. Position papers.

3. Group performance.

Note: By substituting the article entitled "War and Peace" from *Maclean's*, January 21, 1991, p. 34, the focus of this lesson could be changed. The issue question would be "Should Canada go to war against Iraq?" As well, the issue question can be revised by asking "Should Canada (the USA) have gone to war against Iraq?" This would involve more research to identify new perspectives and updates on the conflict.

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.9

SAMPLE RETRIEVAL CHART

SHOULD THE USA GO TO WAR AGAINST IRAQ?

Importance of the Issue:

Dilemma:

Underlying Assumptions, Premises, Values:

POSITIONS	
FOR	AGAINST
Argument 1 Evidence	Argument 1 Evidence
Argument 1 Evidence	Argument 1 Evidence
Argument 1 Evidence	Argument 1 Evidence
Argument 1 Evidence	Argument 1 Evidence

STUDENT PRINTOUT 1.10

PEER REVISION SHEET

Carefully read your classmate's paper you have received and fill in the following information.

1. Your paper _____ clearly identifies the dilemma and states your position.
   _____ has at least three well developed arguments in support of your position.
   _____ has appropriate supporting evidence for your arguments.

2. The ideas I liked best in your paper were _____
   _____
   _____
   This is because _____
   _____
   _____

3. The ideas contained in your paper that I think need to be rewritten or further developed are
   _____
   _____
   _____
   This is because _____
   _____
   _____

4. I think your paper is _____ extremely persuasive.
   _____ very persuasive.
   _____ generally persuasive.
   _____ not very persuasive.

5. I enjoyed reading your paper because _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Editor's Name _____

SAMPLE LESSON 9:

DEALING WITH CHANGE: THE K•W•L APPROACH

Overview

Our world is undergoing constant and rapid change. Consequently, social studies teachers may have difficulty teaching some topics in the social studies program, 9B. How can teachers deal with the change in what was formerly the Soviet Union? One way is by using K•W•L.

The K•W•L approach, a strategy for reading informational materials in the language arts has been adapted from Carr and Ogle.* It is a powerful strategy that takes the student from what he or she knows about a topic (K), to the development of questions by students themselves to guide research (W—Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?), and finally, to a summation of what has been learned (L).

- •K – What do you know about this topic? (Can be divided into sub-categories.)
- •W – What do you need to know about this topic? (Questions developed by students—may also be divided into sub-categories.)
- •L – What have you learned about this topic? And corresponding sub-categories?

The power of the K•W•L approach comes from the fact that students develop their own questions for research and are therefore generally more motivated to seek out the answers. Students decide to learn about a particular topic, problem or issue.

General Procedure

1. Sketch a large retrieval chart on the blackboard, as illustrated below.

K	W	L
What do you know about _____?	What do you need to know about _____?	What have you learned about _____?
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

*Adapted with permission of D.M. Ogle and E. Carr.

For details see Carr, E. and Ogle, D.M., "K•W•L Plus: A Strategy for Comprehension and Summarization", Journal of Reading, April 1987, pp. 126–131.

Ogle, D.M., "K•W•L: A Teaching Model That Develops Active Reading of Expository Text", The Reading Teacher, February, 1986, pp. 564–570.

2. In a large group discussion, have students contribute **what they think they know** about the topic being examined. You may have to sub-categorize ideas depending on the topic, problem or issue chosen. Write ideas under the headings on the blackboard. Students should write these in their notebooks as well.

3. Discuss the results of their collective knowledge. In general, students will see that their knowledge about the given topic is limited.

4. Ask students what they might need to know about a particular topic to understand it more fully Ask them to phrase their ideas in the form of questions (five Ws and How). Avoid rhetorical questions, and "would", "could", "should". List these under the W heading on the blackboard (and by category if these exist). **Accept all questions** (unless they are repeated or rephrased versions of questions already on the list). Students list these under W in their notebooks.

5. Explain that students have developed a list of questions which will help them find out more about the topic. Students will now carry out their own investigation (using materials provided by the teacher and/or through library research) to find the answers to **their** questions.

6. Have students find the answers to **their** questions individually or in groups. Have them share the results of their research **after** an appropriate period of research. (What did they learn about the topic?) Together, they should be able to find the majority of answers to their research questions. Answers should be put under the "L" column in their notebooks. They should compare their new knowledge with what they thought they knew about it initially (K).

7. Have students use what they have learned about their topic in some meaningful way. Students could choose one aspect of their new knowledge to make a presentation to class: write a report, essay or position paper; or develop a chronology (time line) of events.

Sample Lesson — Social Studies 9B:

Political and Economic Conditions in the Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union)

Time: 2–3 weeks (four 40-minute classes/week)

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is to have students conduct an inquiry into the current political, economic and social conditions of the former Soviet republics.

Objectives

Knowledge: Students will develop an understanding of:

1. the concept of change—economic, political and social
2. economic changes currently affecting the former Soviet republics
3. the impact change has had on quality of life and standards of living in the former Soviet republics.

Skills: Students will be able to:

1. develop research questions
2. identify sources of information (print and non-print)
3. acquire information to find answers to questions through reading and observing
4. orally present information about an aspect of the current social, political or economic conditions in the former Soviet republics
5. observe the courtesies of group discussion
6. contribute to a group and group processes.

Attitudes: Students will develop:

1. empathy for people who have been affected by change.

Resources

- Library resources. Work with the librarian to identify periodical and newspaper resources (clipping files) to aid in student research.
- Video clips from *CBC-TV News in Review*.
- Handout (retrieval chart).

Note: This activity should occur **only** after a thorough study of the economic, political and social conditions of the USSR prior to 1985.

Methodology

Opening Activities

1. On the blackboard, sketch a large retrieval chart similar to the one below. Distribute a copy of the chart to students.

K	W	L
What do you know about the current situation in the former USSR?	What will you need to know to find out more about this topic?	What have you learned about this topic?
Economic –		
Political –		
Social –		

2. In a large group discussion, have students contribute **what they think they know** about the current situation in the former USSR. Categorize their ideas (economic, political and social). Have students write these on their charts.

3. Discuss their collective knowledge. How much do they appear to know about the events that have taken place in the former Soviet Union?

4. Ask students what they might need to know about the changes that have occurred and continue to occur in the former USSR. Ask them to phrase their ideas in the form of questions using Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? **only**. Accept all student questions unless they are repeated or rephrased versions of others. Again, categorize the questions (economic, political, social). These should be recorded on student charts.

Note: Students will probably generate a large number of questions. Try not to limit them. Once it appears that they have exhausted their ideas, bring this activity to a close. You might want to add any questions you feel are important and have been missed by students, but there should **not** be a larger number of teacher-generated questions, than student-generated questions.

Developmental Activities

1. Explain to students that they will be using their questions to acquire more knowledge about the current economic, political and social situation in the former USSR. Each student is to attempt to find as many answers to the questions as possible.

2. Have students conduct their research. Three general approaches might be taken:

   a. The teacher provides all resources to use in the classroom (print and non-print).

   b. The students use library resources to conduct all research.

   c. Students use a combination of teacher-prepared resources and library resources.

   Students write answers to the questions in the "L" column of their retrieval charts.

3. Organize students into groups of four. Have them share the answers they have found. Encourage them to add new and additional information to their own information.

4. In a large group discussion, compare their research findings (L) with what they thought they knew about the topic (K). How has their understanding of the topic changed as a result of their research? What did they learn about research questions? How important are they in the search for information?

Culminating Activities

1. Organize students in pairs. Together, they choose one aspect of their research that they found interesting and prepare a 5- to 10-minute presentation for the class that includes the following:

   a. Introduction – a brief explanation of their topic and reasons why they chose it.

   b. Body – detailed information about the topic (1985 to the present).

   c. Conclusion – predictions of changes related to their topic which they feel will occur in the next year, with reasons to support their predictions.

   d. Visual support (diagrams, posters, time lines, pictures).

Evaluation

1. Research process (self-evaluation).

2. Presentation.

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IV CORRELATION OF CURRENT AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES FROM THE TEACHER RESOURCE MANUALS

This section provides a quick reference guide to Teacher Resource Manuals (TRM) that make reference to current affairs.

Junior High Social Studies Teacher Resource Manual, 1989

SOCIAL STUDIES 7—PEOPLE AND THEIR CULTURE

Topic 7A: Culture
TRM Page: 54
Objective: Knowledge of the concept "culture"
Communication skills
Activity: *Alternative Strategies for Research/Enrichment*: "Design an eye-witness account for a CBC production on a real/imaginary culture . . . "

Topic 7B: Cultural Transition: A Case Study of Japan
TRM Page: 58
Objective: Research, data collection
Activity: *Introductory Activities*: Before beginning the unit, students are asked to bring advertisements about Japan or articles made in Japan to school. Make a collage of advertisements depicting Japanese products.

Topic 7C: Canada: A Bilingual and Multicultural Country
TRM Page: 76
Objective: Research, data collection
Activity: *Canada's Multicultural Policy*: Find current statistical charts and graphs showing the cultural diversity of Alberta and Canada.

TRM Page: 81
Objective: Organizational, communication skills
Activity: *Culminating Activities*: "Plan a school bulletin board display to illustrate/demonstrate the contributions of cultural groups to Canada." Many items can be found in current newspapers and magazines.

SOCIAL STUDIES 8—HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Topic 8A: Geography of Canada and the United States
TRM Page: 86–87
Objective: Knowledge about natural disasters; positive attitude toward the study and usefulness of geography
Activity: *Introductory Activities*: Study examples of natural disasters (e.g., drought).

TRM Page: 87
Objective: Knowledge and communication skills
Activity: *Introductory Activities*: "Display (on bulletin board/in classroom) a wide variety of pictures/photographs that illustrate the variety of landforms, climate, vegetation and natural life as well as human activities associated with them. Sources include tourist brochures, calendars, magazines (especially geographic and travel), embassy materials."

TRM Page: 92
Objective: Research skills
Activity: *What are the major physical characteristics of Canada and the United States?* "Students can be asked to bring photographs that show physical geography of places in North America they have visited or found in a magazine."

TRM Page: 99
Objective: Knowledge and communication skills
Activity: *What are the regions of Canada and the United States?* The students present information, using articles, interviews, weather, cartoons, letters, want ads, and sports that illustrates the relationship between geography and human activity or regions.

Topic 8B: Canada: History to the Twentieth Century
TRM Page: 115
Objective: Synthesis of knowledge; understand media format
Activity: *Why was the West settled?* Students are asked to create a game show, similar to "Front Page Challenge". Students will need to watch this show on television to determine how the show is designed and produced. For example, you need a moderator, a panel (four people), several major stories with someone knowledgeable about each story.

TRM Page: 116
Objective: Research and communication skills
Activity: *How did individuals contribute to the political development of Canada?* Prepare a presentation using articles or television interviews describing current Canadian political figures.

Topic 8C: South America: A Case Study of Brazil
TRM Page: 124
Objective: Geographic and current events knowledge
Activity: *What are the major physical features of Brazil?* Use current events to " . . . develop an ongoing **collage** as students find and bring in pictures, news items, etc., pertaining to Brazil." See also p. 129 where students are asked to ". . . research and prepare a visual presentation on the customs and traditions of Brazil."

TRM Page: 131
Objective: Research data for a problem-solving question
Activity: *Future issues and concerns about Brazil*: "Collect newspaper clippings to support the statement: 'Human activities can alter the physical characteristics of places'."

SOCIAL STUDIES 9—ECONOMIC GROWTH: DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES

Topic 9A: Economic Growth: U.S.A.
TRM Page: 146
Objective: Inquiry skill—focus on the issue
Activity: *The Market Economy*: Use current events to develop issues from Canada or the U.S.A. on the role of entrepreneurs, labour, government and consumers.

Topic 9B: Economic Growth: U.S.S.R.
TRM Page: 159
Objective: Research and critical abilities
Activity: *What historical issues influenced the industrial development of the U.S.S.R.?* Create a cartoon expressing a point of view on the 1917 Russian Revolution. Use current political cartoons as a model.

Topic 9C: Canada: Responding to Change
TRM Page: 171
Objective: Knowledge of Canada's mixed economy; data collection skills
Activity: *How is technological change affecting our quality of life?* Find newspaper articles and cartoons that deal with trade, government regulations and free enterprise.

TRM Page: 174–175
Objective: Critical thinking skills—detecting bias in media reports
Activity: *How are labour and management responding to technological change?* Use a current labour dispute to study the various points of view on the issue. Collect print and electronic reports to identify the use of bias and/or propaganda techniques.

Senior High Social Studies 10–20–30 Teacher Resource Manual, 1990

SOCIAL STUDIES 10—CANADA IN THE MODERN WORLD

Topic 10A: Canada in the Twentieth Century
TRM Page: 100
Objective: Research skills
Activity: *Simulation of a Federal–Provincial Conference*: Research the history and current events (recent developments) for selected topics.

TRM Page: 114
Objective: Research and communication skills
Activity: *Time Line of Significant Canadian Events:* Students find current examples of regional interests and the effects of regional interests on Canadian society.

TRM Page: 115
Objective: Decision making and communication skills
Activity: *Horseshoe Debate on Sovereignty*: This debate is based on a current issue identified from the media. Political cartoons, articles and videotape material should be gathered on the issue.

TRM Page: 118
Objective: Research skills, knowledge and attitude development
Activity: *(Closure): Foreign Policy Scrapbook*: "In order to be better informed about current foreign policy matters, students could compile a scrapbook of newspaper and magazine articles over a two- to three-week period."

Topic 10B: Citizenship in Canada
TRM Page: 132
Objective: Critical thinking skills
Activity: *(Closure): Application of a Problem-Solving Strategy to Human Rights*: Current articles are used to define problems of human rights in Canada.

TRM Page: 145
Objective: Research and communication skills
Activity: *Citizen Participation (Wall Display)*: "Students are given an assignment to find at least five news articles that illustrate citizens using the various methods identified in No. 1. Over a two-week period, students bring in articles they have found and post these under the appropriate heading."

SOCIAL STUDIES 20—THE GROWTH OF THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Topic 20A: Development and Interaction of Nations: Nineteenth Century Europe
TRM Page: 159
Objective: Data collection
Activity: *(Opener): Defining Nationalism*: Students extend their understanding of the concept of nationalism by finding examples of nationalism today in the media.

Topic 20B: Interdependence in the Global Environment
TRM Page: 190
Objective: Creative thinking skills
Activity: *(Opener): Future Gazing*: ". . . students are asked to make predictions about the future by creating the headlines for the front page of a newspaper in the future."

TRM Page: 217
Objective: Library research skills
Activity: *Library Orientation for Seminar Research*: Students learn to use current periodicals to find current material for this topic.

SOCIAL STUDIES 30—THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Topic 30A: Political and Economic Systems
TRM Page: 232
Objective: Developing generalizations
Activity: *(Opener): Pitchmen in Russia*: Students can use the article "Pitchmen in Russia", *Maclean's*, July 25, 1988, or ". . . a more recent article about economic change in the communist world". In light of the dynamic changes in the communist world, a more recent article would be advised.

Topic 30B: Global Interaction in the Twentieth Century
TRM Page: 260
Objective: Knowledge
Activity: *(Opener): Recurring Issues: German Reunification—Feasible? Desirable?* "Teachers are encouraged to examine more recent issues (or use more updated articles on this issue) as the basis of the activity."

TRM Page: 272
Objective: Decision-making inquiry skills
Activity: *(Closure): Inquiry into Issues of Today's World—A Significant Issue*: "It is important to remember that this is a current issue assignment so that news magazine and newspaper articles are going to be the primary sources of research material."

TRM Page: 290
Objective: Decision-making inquiry skills
Activity: *(Closure): UN Security Council (Simulation)*: "The teacher together with the students will choose an issue that reflects a current international problem. . . . The issue will need to be important enough for research material (newspapers, magazines, etc.) to be readily available."

Senior High Social Studies 13–23–33 Teacher Resource Manual, 1990

SOCIAL STUDIES 13—CANADA IN THE MODERN WORLD

Topic 13A: Challenges for Canada in the Twentieth Century
TRM Page: 99
Objective: Research; data collection and mapping skills
Activity: *Mapping and Continuums for Regional Diversity*: Gather current unemployment rates for the provinces to show trends over time.

TRM Page: 107
Objective: Decision-making inquiry skills
Activity: *(Closure): Creation of a Canadian Magazine*: Students should examine several magazines to determine how theirs will look and what kinds of materials should be included. The meaning of "current events" should be explained so that the magazine is anchored in a firm context of time and place. For example, are the ads and cartoons to reflect the present, past or future?

Topic 13B: Citizenship in Canada
TRM Page: 126
Objective: Analysis of readings
Activity: *Analysis of Human Rights Violations*: "The teacher should collect a number of short articles that deal with human rights violations." These should be collected from the local paper if possible.

TRM Page: 131
Objective: Research; inquiry skills; independent study
Activity: *(Closure): Independent Project on a Contemporary Case Study*: "Students will independently research a current issue regarding rights and responsibilities."

SOCIAL STUDIES 23—THE GROWTH OF THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Topic 23A The Development of the Modern World
TRM Page: 172
Objective: Listening skills
Activity: (*Opener*): *Problem Identification:* "Students work in large groups, listening to and analyzing songs that raise concerns about modern-day problems." These songs should be recent releases if possible.

TRM Page: 174
Objective: Library research and data collection skills
Activity: *Research into Current Nationalism:* "This activity requires students to use acquired knowledge of historical nationalism and apply it to current types of nationalism through library research. Useful, current periodicals, newspapers and other materials should be identified by the teacher in conjunction with the librarian."

Topic 23B: Challenges in the Global Environment
TRM Page: 197
Objective: Critical thinking skills
Activity: *Detecting Fact, Opinion and Bias*: "As students develop an interest in current international issues they must be able to develop a critical approach to the material with which they are working." Students must ". . . develop critical thinking skills to distinguish fact from opinion, determine reliability and accuracy of data and detect bias in material."

TRM Page: 202
Objective: Synthesize data; communication skills
Activity: *(Closure): Newspaper Feature Article:* Students must produce an article modelled on examples from newspapers to write a story on the issue: "To what extent should our concept of quality of life be used to measure the quality of life in other nations?"

TRM Page: 210–212
Objective: Participation and communication skills
Activity: *(Opener): Developing a Global Perspective*: What things concern people? Examples from current events can be used to show that the news media identify the major concerns of the day through their selection of news stories. "Ask students to bring to class a clipping of a recent newspaper or magazine article related to one of the issues the class has identified." Do the students ever identify any issues that are not covered by the media?

TRM Page: 216
Objective: Identify relationships and hypothesize reasons
Activity: *Relationships Among Factors Influencing Quality of Life (Graphing)*: Students select countries and look for ". . . current maps or statistical tables . . ." as sources of information about each country for comparative purposes.

TRM Page: 219
Objective: Collect data and assess resource material
Activity: *The Effect of Environmental Situations on Quality of Life (Learning Stations)*: Among the variety of resources used in a station are ". . . articles from magazines or newspapers".

SOCIAL STUDIES 33—THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Topic 33A: Political and Economic Systems
TRM Page: 243
Objective: Critical and creative thinking skills
Activity: *(Closure): Political and Economic Analyst Report*: The students are to play the role of ". . . commentators for a local television station in a fictional country." They are to use a news hour format. Models of this format could be used by showing a taped show, such as *The National* or *Nightline*.

Topic 33B: Global Interaction in the Twentieth Century
TRM Page: 267
Objective: Critical and creative thinking and communication skills
Activity: *Experience History as It Happens—Being a Newspaper Writer*: Each student is assigned to be a reporter for a particular newspaper. The student is set in a particular context for writing his or her reports. Examples of reports should be selected as models for student writing.

TRM Page: 269
Objective: Gather, interpret and communicate information
Activity: *(Closure): The Changing Role of the Superpowers—Vertical File/Scrapbook Assignment*: Students gather newspaper and magazine articles to determine a trend in superpower relations over time.

TRM Page: 275
Objective: Gathering and interpreting information
Activity: *(Opener): Understanding Nationalism and Internationalism*: "Students should be provided with readings that give examples of both nationalism and internationalism." These sources may include current examples from newspapers and periodicals.

TRM Page: 285
Objective: Critical thinking skills
Activity: *(Closure): Deciding How to Solve International Concerns and Problems—Becoming Involved*: "The teacher may begin with a discussion on current problems in the world today."

V RESOURCES

MEDIA LITERACY

The study of current affairs in social studies provides an opportunity for the study of the media—the medium as well as the message. A good source for the study of media is a resource guide from the Ontario Ministry of Education called *Media Literacy: Intermediate and Senior Divisions*, 1989. It is available as a teacher reference from the Alberta Education Learning Resources Distributing Centre (LRDC), order number 0SS07075. This resource has suggestions for the study of all kinds of media: television, film, radio, popular music and rock video, photographs and print. It includes a comprehensive list of media resource materials and sources of information.

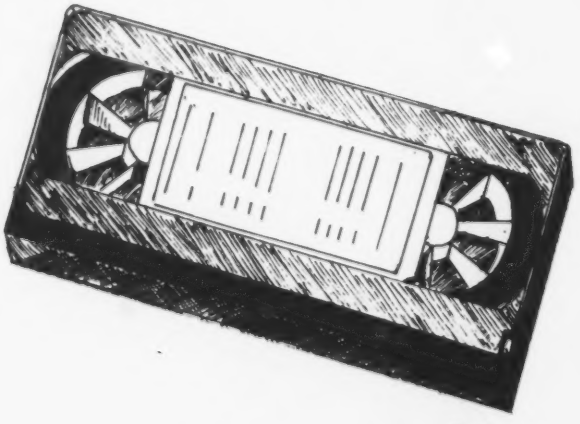
A STUDY OF THE TELEVISION MEDIUM

Television has tremendous power and influence in our society. The media kit from the National Film Board, *Media and Society*, examines this medium in a critical manner. One of the articles from the kit, "Structure of Reassurance" by Joyce Nelson, deals with the nature of the television media. This could be read and discussed by students. It provides an excellent analysis of the nature of news shows, such as *The National* on CBC.

CBC-TV NEWS IN REVIEW

The use of television news videos for the study of current events can be very effective. Of course, the students will have to be made aware of some news and documentary programs they may not normally watch. Schools that subscribe to *CBC-TV News in Review* already get a monthly videotape of selected news stories from their nightly news broadcast, *The National*.

CBC-TV News in Review is a commercial service that provides schools with news material on a monthly basis. Using this service avoids any legal problems that can arise from teachers taping news programs at home for school use. The *CBC-TV News in Review* chooses four or five key news stories for the month and provides the news video and historical context for a more in-depth examination. A print study guide is provided along with the video.



The purpose of these materials is well expressed in the guide:

> Students must become more knowledgeable about current events if they are to make informed decisions about issues. A critical viewing of the video and a judicious use of this guide and of research activities will help students appreciate the complexity of issues, the role played by decision-makers, and the importance of the historical context of any given situation *(CBC-TV News in Review*, September, 1990, p. 7).

Most schools in Alberta have access to this program through their media centres. Check with your nearest media centre or write to:

CBC-TV News in Review
CBC Educational Sales
Box 500, Station A,
Toronto, ON
M5W 1E6

ALBERTA EDUCATION MONOGRAPHS

The Curriculum Branch of Alberta Education has prepared a number of documents to assist teachers in the development of programs of study. Documents which may provide additional information and ideas for the development of current affairs in social studies include:

- *Teaching Thinking: Enhancing Learning*, 1990
- *Focus on Research: A Guide to Developing Students' Research Skills*, 1990

These documents are available from the LRDC at nominal cost. *Making the Grade* and *Together We Learn*, available from the LRDC, may also be useful teacher resources.

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Students should have access to a wide variety of newspapers and periodicals.

The school's library should subscribe to both Canadian and American periodicals, **as well as** the *Canadian Index to Periodical Literature*. Suggested periodicals:

- *Maclean's*
- *Current History*
- *Newsweek*
- *Canada and the World*
- *U.S. News and World Report*
- *Time*
- *Saturday Night*
- *Alberta Report*

The school library should receive at least one copy of the major local newspaper. The librarian should be encouraged to prepare clipping files of selected topics which relate to the social studies program. The social studies teacher and librarian should work closely together to ensure that relevant information is being collected and that files are continually updated.

Copies of newspapers are available from most major cities across North America. Contact the major newspaper office in your area (e.g., *The Edmonton Journal* or *Calgary Herald*) to get a list of addresses, telephone numbers or fax numbers for newspapers. Write or call each publisher to request 1–5 copies. You may even request the specific dates you would like to receive them.

Some newspapers offer educational programs for teachers. For example, *The Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald* have a program entitled Newspapers in Education (NIE) to assist teachers and students in using the newspaper in all areas of the curriculum. If you are outside these cities, check to see if your local newspaper offers a similar service.

APPENDIX A

MODELS OF INQUIRY

A Model for Answering Questions or Solving Problems	A Model for Making Decisions	A Model for the Inquiry Process (1981)
– Define a question/problem	– Identify an issue	– Identify and focus on the issue
– Develop questions or hypotheses to guide research	– Identify possible alternatives – Devise a plan for research	– Establish research questions and procedures
– Gather, organize and interpret information	– Gather, organize and interpret information	– Gather and organize data – Analyze and evaluate data
– Develop a conclusion/ solution	– Evaluate the alternatives, using collected information	– Synthesize data – Resolve the issue
	– Make a decision; plan or take action consistent with the decision (if desirable and feasible)	– Apply the decision (or postpone taking action)
	– Evaluate the action plan and decision making	– Evaluate the decision, the process, and (where pertinent) the action

APPENDIX B

(Processes for problem solving and decision making)

INQUIRY STRATEGIES

Inquiry strategies are combinations of discrete skills used to answer questions, solve problems and resolve issues. In the senior high program, students develop and use critical and creative thinking strategies as well as problem-solving, decision-making and inquiry strategies (see the *Social Studies 10–20–30 Teacher Resource Manual*, 1990, pp. 319–321).

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking includes a number of skills related to problem solving and decision making. Key critical thinking skills include:

	9	10	20	30
1. Distinguish between facts and values.	•	•	★	★
2. Determine reliability of data.	•	•	★	★
3. Determine the accuracy of data.	•	•	★	★
4. Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information.	•	•	★	★
5. Detect bias in materials.	•	•	★	★
6. Identify stated and unstated assumptions.	•	•	★	★
7. Identify ambiguous arguments.	•	•	•	★
8. Recognize inconsistencies in a line of reasoning.	•	•	•	★
9. Determine the strength of an argument.	•	★	★	★
10. Consider personal values as a guide to decision making.	•	•	★	★
11. Examine and assess a variety of viewpoints on issues before forming an opinion.	•	•	★	★
12. Examine evidence and consider alternatives before making a decision.	•	•	★	★
13. Identify, use and evaluate various approaches to solve problems.	•	•	★	★

CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking includes the cognitive behaviours of novelty and insight. These processes are used to create new thought patterns, unique products and innovative solutions to problems. Many of these behaviours are idiosyncratic, and as a result are difficult to define and reproduce.

Skills on the chart are identified at two levels:

- • Instruction Level
  The teacher diagnoses students' ability levels in the given skill and teaches the skill required to the students through planned learning experiences. Skill development and growth can be assessed at this level.
- ★ Independent Level
  The skill is further developed, where necessary, and is maintained and extended through practise.

However, instruction should develop creative thinking behaviours by engaging students in activities.

	9	10	20	30
1. Brainstorm to collect novel and wide-ranging ideas.	•	•	★	★
2. Visualize a unique way of performing a task.	•	•	★	★
3. Predict a trend in society.	•	•	★	★
4. Develop an analogy to show relationships in a new light.	•	•	★	★
5. Create a metaphor to describe a situation or occurrence.	•	•	★	★
6. Produce a model to demonstrate learning.	•	•	★	★
7. State intuitive thoughts that may reveal new insights.	•	•	★	★
8. Develop innovative approaches in learning.	•	•	★	★
9. Demonstrate independence of thought.	•	•	★	★

PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem solving is a strategy of using a variety of skills to answer a question (Who? Why? What? Where? When? and How?) or solve a problem.

	9	10	20	30
1. Define a problem/question.	•	★	★	★
2. Develop questions or hypotheses to guide research.	•	•	★	★
3. Gather, organize and interpret information.	•	★	★	★
4. Develop a conclusion/solution.	•	•	★	★

DECISION MAKING

Decision making is the strategy of using values and a variety of skills to determine a solution to a problem/issue that involves a choice (should) and that requires a decision for action.

	9	10	20	30
1. Identify an issue.	•	★	★	★
2. Identify possible alternatives.	•	★	★	★
3. Devise a plan for research.	•	•	★	★
4. Gather, organize and interpret information.	•	★	★	★
5. Evaluate the alternatives, using collected information.	•	•	★	★
6. Make a decision, plan to take action consistent with position held if desirable or feasible.	•	★	★	★
7. Evaluate the action plan and the decision-making process.	•	•	★	★

SOCIAL INQUIRY PROCESS

The social inquiry process is a specific strategy for investigating and, where possible, resolving social issues.

	9	10	20	30
1. Identify and focus on the issue.	•	•	★	★
2. Establish research questions and procedures.	•	•	★	★
3. Gather and organize data.	•	•	★	★
4. Analyze and evaluate data.	•	•	★	★
5. Synthesize data.	•	•	★	★
6. Resolve the issue (postpone taking action).	•	•	★	★
7. Apply the decision.	•	•	★	★
8. Evaluate the decision and process.	•	•	★	★

APPENDIX C

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

BACKGROUND

Controversial issues are those topics which are publicly sensitive and on which there is no consensus of values or belief. By their nature, controversial issues generate diverse opinions and debate on the distinctions between right and wrong, justice and injustice, and on interpretations of fairness and tolerance. They include topics on which reasonable people may sincerely disagree.

Opportunities to deal with sensitive issues and topics are an integral part of the education programs and schooling process in Alberta. Alberta Education recognizes that education cannot remain neutral on all issues or avoid all topics that are controversial. Alberta Education also recognizes that courses of study and education programs offered in Alberta schools must handle controversial issues in a manner that respects the rights and opinions reflected in different perspectives, but that rejects extreme or unethical positions.

For sound judgments to be made, students should have experiences in selecting, organizing and evaluating information. The educational benefits to be gained by studying controversial issues include the development of critical thinking, moral reasoning, and an awareness and understanding of contemporary society.

POLICY

Alberta Education believes that studying controversial issues is important in preparing students to participate responsibly in a democratic and pluralistic society. Such study provides opportunities to develop students' capacities to think clearly, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view, and to reach sound judgments.

LEGISLATION

School Act

25(1) The Minister may by order do the following:

(c) subject to the rights of a board to provide religious instruction, prohibit the use of a course, education program or instructional material in schools; . . .

Other legislation:

Alberta Bill of Rights, R.S.A. 1980, Chapter A-16

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Constitution Act, 1982

The Ministerial Order under section 25(1)(d) of the Act as cited in the Ministerial Orders and Directives section of this Policy Manual.

PROCEDURES

1. Sensitivity on the part of teachers, students and other participants in controversial issues shall be exercised to ensure that students and others are not ridiculed, embarrassed, intimidated or degraded for positions which they hold on controversial issues.

2. Information regarding controversial issues should:

   (a) represent alternative points of view, subject to the condition that resources used are not restricted by any federal or provincial law;
   (b) appropriately reflect the maturity, capabilities and educational needs of the students;
   (c) meet the requirements of provincially prescribed and approved courses of study and education programs; and
   (d) reflect the neighbourhood and community in which the school is located, as well as provincial, national and international contexts.

3. Controversial issues which have been pre-planned by the teacher and those which may arise incidentally in the course of instruction should be used by the teacher to promote critical inquiry rather than advocacy, and to teach students how to think rather than what to think.

4. The school should play a supportive role to parents in the areas of values and moral development, and shall handle parental decisions in regard to Controversial Issues with respect and sensitivity.

Controversial Issues, 1989, Alberta Education.

APPENDIX D

COPYRIGHT—WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

A brochure titled, *Copyright in Alberta Schools—What Teachers Need to Know*, was distributed to teachers in Alberta in November 1992. For further information, please contact:

Legislative Services
10th Floor, West Devonian Building
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 0L2

Telephone: 427-2041, Fax: 422-6507

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FEEDBACK

1. What part of this document did you find most useful?

2. Are there any ideas or activity suggestions you would add?

3. Other comments and suggestions:

Thank you for your feedback!

Please send response to:

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